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THE

HEIRESSES OF FOTHERINGAY.

A Tale Founded on Fact.

BY

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Dedication.

WHATEVER OF MERIT, OR ITS OPPOSITE,

THE FOLLOWING PAGES MAY PARTAKE OF, THEY ARE,

WITH ALL THAT

FERVENCY OF AFFECTION,

WHICH CAN POSSIBLY ANIMATE THE BOSOM

OF A RELATIVE,

DEDICATED TO MY BELOVED NIECE,

Miss Harriette C. Kennerly.

The Author.

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THE

HEIRESSES OF FOTHERINGAY;

A

TALE FOUNDED ON FACT.

CHAPTER I.

Suavity is to the mind, as the idea of Heaven is to the soul.

THE sun had finished his daily course, succeeded by a clear, yet cold moonlight night, in the month of January, when three gentlemen, merchants from the city of New York, dismounted at the door of a country tavern, near the foot of that range of mountains known as the Alleghanies, and which at that point throws its piny and cloud-capped peaks, across the Valley of Virginia.

Our travellers were soon comfortably situated, and in the enjoyment of a warm fire, made of hickory wood, the brisk and bright blaze of which, together with the neatness of every thing in the room, induced the belief with them, that the house at which they had stopped for that night among the mountains was one far above mean notoriety.

"You will please excuse this intrusion upon your privacy, gentlemen—when, according to the custom of those of us, who keep houses of entertainment in this

State, and more particularly after the cold ride you have had to-day—when I bring for your use, and I hope comfort, if you will partake of it, a bottle of ten year old peach brandy, with a little honey and sugar if you like the addition of either, all of which is at your service."

"You are kind, landlord," said the elder gentleman, "and, if this specimen of the anticipated wishes of your guests is only the prelude of what may be expected of you, you may have some one or perhaps all of us here a longer time than for the present night alone, in this dreary and inclement season."

"You are complimentary; yet believe me, sir, should your home among these mountains for a longer or a shorter time, be my house, it shall be my aim as well as that of my family to make your stay an agreeable one," was the response. At that moment, the sound of a small bell in the "bar-room," attracted his attention, and bowing with a courtesy betokening the gentleman, the landlord withdrew from their presence, leaving the guests to partake at their leisure of his hospitality. The gentlemen had just seated themselves, after partaking of it, when a tap was made at the door of their room followed by the entry of a servant, informing them that their supper was ready.

"That is welcome news, for I am really hungry," said one of the younger gentlemen, as they passed through a lighted hall, conducted by the servant. Upon entering the dining-room, they discovered, seated at the table and awaiting their arrival, a lady whose appearance would justify the conclusion of her having lived some forty years. She was a model of affability

and kindness, united to all that amiability which so eminently distinguished the matrons of the State in which the scene of this tale is laid.

The strangers had scarcely begun to partake of their plain, yet palatable supper, ere the sound of music was heard; it emanated from one of the private apartments, and in a room as they supposed, adjoining the one in which they were seated. Soon after, two female voices were heard accompanied by the music of a piano-forte and guitar.

The words were:

"Winds of the winter night, whence comest thou;
And whither, oh whither, art wandering now?
Sad, sad is thy voice on the desolate moor,
And mournful, oh mournful, thy howl at my door.
Say where hast thou been on thy cloud-lifted car—
Say what hast thou seen in thy roamings afar?
Oh, what sorrow impels thee through boisterous blast,
Thus to mourn and complain, as thou journeyest past?
I have come from the deep where the storm in its wrath
Spread havoc and death on the pitiless path;
Where the billows rose up as the lightning flew by,
And twisted its arms in the dim-colored sky.
I have been where the snow on the chill mountain-peak,
Would have frozen the beam on the ruddiest cheek.
And for many a dreary and desolate day,
No beam of the sunshine has lighted my way.
And I saw a frail vessel all torn by the wave,
Borne down with her crew to a fathomless grave;
And I heard the loud creak of her hull as I past,
And the flap of her sails and the crack of her mast.
But it smote on mine ear like the tocsin of death,
As she struggled and strove with the waters for breath;
'Tis her requiem I time, as I howl through the sky,
And repent of the fury that caused her to die."

During the time occupied by the song, not a word was heard, except now and then an inquiry from the lady already mentioned, with regard to the further wishes of her guests. Have you supped? For long before the last line of the song,

"And repent of the fury that caused her to die—"

had been sung—the travellers had ceased to gratify their physical, but sat enveloped in profound silence and mute attention, indulging their (at that time) ravenous, sensual appetites.

The supper fed their bodies—
The music fed their souls.

"Can I help you to any thing more, gentlemen?" continued the lady in rather an emphatic tone, and as if she wished not only to render them comfortable, as had been already done, but in continuing to do so, to make them feel at ease, in that, at the period of which I am now speaking, retired, yet enchanting spot amongst the mountains.

"Madam," said the elder gentleman, "your kind civilities extended to us have already surpassed our most remote expectations, and the solicitude you appear to feel, from the question just asked us, prompts the conviction of a belief already entertained, not only by myself, but those also of my junior fellow travellers, that the hospitality of the inhabitants of this state far excels that of any other in the Union."

"In behalf of my sex and that of yours, embracing our fellow-citizens of Virginia, sir, I thank you for the compliment—for I will do myself the pleasure of believing its author sincere," was the reply.

At this moment her husband entered the dining-apartment, saying, "That a party of young men of the neighborhood, who were about to have a deer-hunt the next day, had just arrived, intending their house as 'head-quarters,' preparatory to the chase, and that they wished supper and field-beds that night."

The lady made an apology for the necessity she was under to leave them; and our travellers returned to their chamber. They had been in the room but a short time, when the landlord, accompanied by a servant with a lantern in his hand, entered their door, saying, "I am come, gentlemen, to go with and show you, if you wish to see it, how your horses have been provided for, for the night, and to know, if any thing, what further you would have me do for them."

In a short time, our travellers were at the stalls, where stood the horses, up to their knees in dry, short straw; their legs and bodies perfectly clean, and which had been rubbed till they were entirely dry.

"Nothing is more acceptable to the feelings of a traveller than that of knowing his horse is well taken care of," said the elder gentleman, as they were returning from the stable to the house.

"And nothing," replied the landlord, "adds more to the interests and fame of a country tavern-keeper, than to know that his guests are satisfied with their fare, such, as I hope on the present occasion is the case."

"Certainly so," was the reply, just as they were entering the room.

Here, reader, we will leave them for a while, speaking of and spending their opinions upon the events already experienced of that night, while we shall endeavor to

take items of things as they occurred, and in noticing of them, try to relate them to you in such a way as may, we hope, be most conducive to your amusement and pleasure.

The huntsmen, six in number, had taken their supper, and were already in a room warmed by a large fire, composed of two logs of hickory wood, put one upon the top of the other, called there "back-logs," and made complete by a stout "fore-stick," with other smaller ones between them. Nor was that preparation against the chilling blasts of the night the only one, for they had a plentiful supply of it piled up in a corner of the room close to the fire-place, so that, in that cold region, where the north wind blows as keen and shrill as any where else in a winter's night, they were, so far as the article of fire was concerned, secure from cold.

In a short time, a "field-bed" was added to their comfort for the night. It consisted of a number of blankets spread on the floor, in front of the fire, with as many more to cover with, having at its head several chairs laid down with their backs upwards, upon which were deposited, bolsters and a pillow for each one to lay his head, while their feet lay toward the fire.

CHAPTER II.

"Honor and fame from no condition rise,
Act well your part, there all the honor lies."

"SANCO," said one of the hunters to a servant who had just finished their bed, and was about leaving the room, "has the Colonel retired?"

"No, sir."

"Where is he?"

"He is in conversation with Mr. Close in the chamber of reception."

"With whom, did you say?"

"Mr. Close."

"What! has he come?"

"Yes, sir."

"How long ago?"

"While you gentlemen were at supper."

"Who was the messenger sent to him?"

"Mr. Hardy, sir."

"What! is he here, too?"

"Yes, sir."

"When did he come?"

"While the travellers were in the stable looking at their horses, sir."

"Has Mr. Hardy seen the strangers?"

"No, sir."

"Nor they him?"

"Not to my knowledge, sir."

"Where did Mr. Hardy cross the Roanoke river when he went for Mr. Close?"

"At the upper ford, sir; and I heard him tell the Colonel that it was a difficult job to do, and that on his return the ice ran so thick as to compel him to go round the big bend, and cross at the Muscle Shoal ford."

"Go, Sanco," continued the hunter, "and ask the Colonel to send us something to drink."

"That, sir," replied Sanco, "is what I have orders already to do, and was just going after when you began talking to me." Thus saying, Sanco withdrew, and in a few moments after returned with a decanter of fine peach-brandy, a pitcher of water and glasses, and after the gallant huntsmen had made him drink a health to them and success to their schemes, he bade them good-night, and withdrew.

A short interval of profound silence ensued after partaking of their respective glasses of brandy and water, when our spokesman of the hunting party again observed, "Well, boys, some deep design is laid, and I think some very particular business is near at hand for us, in which every man will have, doubtless, a particular part to perform. You have just heard of Close and Hardy being here; there are none the equal of one for discretion, nor of the other for fatigue. And you know, also, with what rigor the Colonel's secretary's 'Dispatch, and right quick,' conducted the order for us to assemble here to-night. The memory of that infamous wretch, and pitiless scoundrel, 'Rashstep,' is still fresh amongst us, who after having robbed and murdered his father, basely insulted Miss Mincle. Hardy soon found and brought

him to justice, and Close was his guard till he died upon a gibbet. The Colonel, as you all know, never deals in mystery without a certainty of maintaining and carrying out his point in the purposes held in view. Nor has he, nor will he, at any time, take a part in pantomime, but what must terminate in the accomplishment of his wish. We have beheld him to-night in the character of an inn-keeper, and playing his part, as you all know, well. And we see him in pantomime in his instructions to us to be silent upon what he has called us here to do.' With the fore-finger perpendicularly across our lips we are to salute him, and with it there, it is to serve as an answer to all questions put to us by strangers, whose position and circumstances in life shall, from time to time, make it necessary for us to observe the signal with. A Colonel in the camp of the illustrious Washington! a soldier of '76.' Now the rich gentleman—the poor man's friend!—the delight of his neighbors!—the father of the beautiful, accomplished and kind-hearted Antoinette, heiress of Fotheringay—and friend of the no less amiable 'Leontine,' shall and must be obeyed by me!"

"And by me, too!" was the immediate and unanimous answer of his high-toned soul companions.

"We will now," continued the huntsman, "seal our resolutions by taking another drink of brandy—then go to bed, be refreshed by sleep, get up soon, and wait for further orders in the morning."

"I agree to that," was the second unanimous reply; and in a few moments after the gallant hearted fellows were wrapped in profound sleep, and all was silent around them.

"Now every passion sinks to rest,
The throbbing heart lies still;
And varying schemes of life,
No more distract the will."

With due deference to the permission of my readers, I shall return to our travellers, to take some notice of their movements, and to try to learn something of how they have thus far passed, and may continue to pass, the remainder of their first night at the "Mountain Inn."

The bliss of an undisturbed mind was not theirs, and consequently sleep had not yet ventured the proposal of even a temporary truce between their eyelids, and that most distressing of all conditions—suspense.

"Summing up all the events of our western tour thus far, then adding to it an hundred per cent., all of them together would not amount to one half the strange and unaccounted for sensations I have felt since I partook of that supper under the roof of this Mountain Inn; the words of that song, and those unknown beings who so secretly added music to them, haunt my imagination, distracts my senses, and dissipate all my attempts at sleep," said the younger stranger, as he arose from his bed, and walked toward the fire, yet burning, and which still kept their room comfortable.

"The disease is contagious," said the elder; "for I cannot sleep."

"Nor I, neither," said the other stranger.

As Littleton in his commentaries upon the laws of England, says, when desirous of giving relief to the mind of the student, "this may suffice for the pre-

sent," so also, reader, I shall profit by his example, and again leaving my travellers, respectfully invite your attention, as well as indulgence, to go with me in the digression, while I shall attempt to interest you with things which have long since passed, but which still linger in memory.

As is already known, some of the parties have been left asleep, and others awake, yet restless, who are destined to act conspicuous parts in the incidents herein detailed, and which are intended for your perusal. I shall therefore close the present chapter, and commence the next one with some account of the father of the Heiresses of Fotheringay, and in the succeeding ones speak of the singular, yet excellent, traits of his character, the birth and education of his daughter, and the adoption by him of Leontine, the other heiress.

CHAPTER III.

When pregnant nature strove relief to gain,
Her nurse was Washington! her midwife pain!

THE American Revolution had brought to the defence of her "Declaration of Independence," hosts of gallant, honorable, and high-minded men. They were found not only in the rank and file of a poorly clad, yet sternly determined soldiery, who felt a guarantee in the assurance of victory, under the disposal of an all-wise Providence, in shouldering the musket and sure-shot rifle, but also in that of the more dignified stations of command.

The justice of her cause, and the success of her arms, had already created an excitement in Europe, and soon the illustrious Lafayette and his noble followers were seen upon our borders, and on their march to join the army of our Heaven-sent chief! Their forces were soon united, and Howe, with others of his Britannic Majesty's subjects, soon experienced the prowess of their power, judgment and skill.

General Green was in the South, whose army had been joined by a number of brave men, and headed by a number of no less brave partizan leaders. Among them was Colonel George Leftridge, and his boyhood associate and friend, the intrepid Major James Laurence.

The battle of Guilford was at hand. Already had Cornwallis collected around him every scouting party he had out, while he had attached to his standard as many of that miserable class of disaffected creatures, the Tories, as could be collected, for the double purpose of striking dismay through the ranks of the mere handful of Americans who were to oppose them, as well as for the cruelty and butchery with which he knew the then cowards of the South were so conversant.

The gallant Green and his faithful followers beheld with regret the dilemma in which they were placed, yet trusting in the omnipotence of that Being who had so eminently shielded and protected them and their fellow countrymen in arms, they calmly awaited the attack. As if to afford the majestic luminary of day additional lustre, as he rose that morning to witness a retreating and struggling army now drawn up in battle array against a victorious foe; not a

cloud was seen upon the horizon, and all was calm and still. That field yet unstained by the blood of Freedom's son was occupied by the army under three divisions. At two o'clock the British advance came into view, the signal was given, and in the next moment two pieces of artillery under command of Singleton opened upon the approaching mass. Soon the rage of battle was heard and felt throughout the lines of both armies; and the vollies of smoke emanating from the destructive fire of their cannon and musketry announced a determined intent to conquer or to die. The English troops kept the field, but their commander had no idea that his and their career in America was so near at an end, and that that victory should be the last he should boast of having won over those who had long since tasted the sweets of liberty, and whose blood was then being spilled freely to maintain it. The toll of his tocsin was begun. The mighty *I Am* had issued the decree! and he who had fought against freemen was shortly to yield up his sword to the immortal Washington. The contest was as obstinate as it was bloody, and shortly before retreat was sounded, Colonel Leftridge, at the head of his troops, was attacked, his horse shot, himself wounded, and left to the mercy of a party of renegade and Tory troops. At that moment the shrill bugle-sound of retreat was heard, and the Americans withdrew from the scene of action. They had encamped at a small distance from it, while Cornwallis had established his head-quarters upon a plentifully supplied farm, with a commodious dwelling some few miles distant, the property of a gentle-

man whose self and sons were then in arms against the invaders of their country.

Things did not remain long in their then condition before a further distance from the enemy was found to be necessary, consequent upon his weakened condition, and Green resolved to cross the Dan river, with a view more effectually to watch the movements of his adversary.

Leftridge was missing: his loss was deeply felt by his general. The uncertainty with regard to his fate, and the absence of his generosity and kind attention to his men, had begun already to create a sombre aspect over the countenances of all. "If alive, what can be done to effect his rescue?" was the inquiry throughout the camp. A towering spirit soon determined it. One who had been accustomed to look calmly upon danger, whose lucid imagination encompassed the boundary of his plan in a minute, and decided upon his course in a second, was in camp.

Laurence, in person, had determined to rescue and save his friend. The plan was formed, and intermixed as it was with danger, he had determined to go that night into the enemy's camp as a Tory, to ascertain, if living, where Leftridge was, what his condition, the chance of having an interview with him, and if possible to effect the escape of both without being discovered. For that purpose, and just before tattoo, he repaired to the tent of his General, who had at that moment just finished his dispatches to the Commander-in-chief, informing him of his defeat, and that of, as he feared, the death of Leftridge.

"General," said he, "I have come to ask your per-

mission to descend to the appearance and actions, though not feelings, of a tory and traitor to my country.

"Colonel Leftridge," continued he, "is a prisoner, and my object is, to rescue him or perish in the attempt. I wish leave of absence from the camp, and am under the impression that ere reveille is beaten, at daylight to-morrow, I shall return with him in safety to his men and to the army."

A moment's pause ensued, when the General replied,

"Have you not been too precipitate in the management of your designs, and are you not rash in undertaking their execution to-night?"

"That may be, sir," replied Laurence, "but with due deference to your permission my purpose is unchangeable; and every moment's delay in the commencement of it, induces the impression upon my mind that if I do not make the attempt to save him my neglect to do so will be an accessary to his death."

"Your intention is generous, your purpose a noble one, and your plan I fear is too perilous for success. Beside," continued the General, "your services are too much needed in the present critical condition of our national affairs for your country to risk the loss, of not only one, but two of her officers, who have so gallantly signalized themselves in her cause. I must, therefore, so far as your application for leave of absence is concerned, refuse."

"Hold!" quickly replied Laurence, as his penetrating eye conveyed an imploring look upon the general. "The pride of being a soldier in the defence of my country is, figuratively speaking, my meat and drink,

nurtured, strengthened and kept vigorous by that portion of the vegetable and animal kingdom, with water, necessary to life. Separate and apart from the love I entertain for my country's cause, is one which exists equally strong within me, and that is, to aid my fellow men, and more especially a friend, whenever it may be in my power; and the greater the peril, the more pride I feel in rendering the service."

"Your argument is a cogent one," replied the general, "and worthy of a brave man. You have my consent, and in addition to it, any one or more of the men of your regiment, if you require them to accompany you in the perfecting of your intended purpose."

In a few moments Laurence was in his own tent preparatory to departure.

"Orderly!"

"Sir," said a fine-looking fellow, who had risen from his seat and saluted Laurence as he entered his quarters.

"Do you know Sergeant Hyne of Company 'C?'"

"Yes, sir."

"Is he on duty?"

"I do not know, sir, but can shortly ascertain if the major chooses."

"Do so; and if he is not, say to him that I wish to see him.'

In a short time the orderly, accompanied by Hyne, was in the presence of Laurence, who they found busily engaged taking off his uniform and putting on the attire of a South Carolinian farmer, from whom he had that day purchased it.

"Can you keep a secret, Hyne?" said Laurence.

"A soldier, sir, ought to do so; more especially when it is given to him as such by his commander."

"Then I presume you can?"

"Yes, sir," was the reply.

"I wish to rescue Colonel Leftridge to-night," continued Laurence, "and have sent for you to accompany me and aid in doing so."

"The major has honored me," said the sergeant, "and if he will allow me a few moments, I shall report myself ready for duty."

In a little time he was by the side of Laurence, and disguised in a pair of cotton trousers, a striped jacket, made of like material, and a long-waisted, close-bodied dress coat of the same, somewhat threadbare and torn at the elbows, a pair of half-worn shoes upon his feet, and an old broad-rimmed wool hat upon his head.

"You are indeed in disguise, sergeant," said the major, as Heyne re-entered the tent.

"I ought to be so, sir, in honor of my superior," replied the sergeant, as he gave the salute saying "I am now ready to obey the orders of the major."

CHAPTER IV.

The requisites to face danger are self-possession, calmness, and nerve.

THE light emanating from the starry-decked heavens was the only one to guide Laurence and his sergeant in their dangerous and pathless way toward the encampment of the enemy, who, in addition to the watchful attention of their sentinels, had at their

command, and at their service, many a disaffected wretch ever ready to give notice of the least alarm.

After crossing the river, as spoken of, in a small pine-log canoe, and having turned their little craft upside down, throwing particles of drift upon it, in order to prevent its discovery, and its being taken by friend or foe, a short delay was occasioned in deciding upon what route to take. That route lay in the direction of the battle-field, and over which they were compelled to pass.

The feelings of Laurence and Hyne were far different now to what they were on the preceding day; then cheered by the hope of victory, and led on to combat under the exhilarating effects of martial music —melancholy was not theirs. The spot upon which war the day before had spread its havoc and carnage, its delineations of the dead and dying, was now being passed over by them in solemn silence.

Upon arriving near that point at which the most fierce part of the action had been sustained, heaps of slain presented, in every direction, the obstinacy with which their brave countrymen had contended against those who were then their dying as well as dead companions upon that blood-stained field. Among other incidents which the unburied condition of the slain, or in other words, neglect of the conquering foe had presented to the imaginatious of our major and his sergeant, was one at that moment transpiring before them,—giving surprise as well as wonder to the cause and meaning of it. Just as they had crossed a small stream of water, and were about ascending to the summit of a bluff bounded by it, they discovered in the distance a torchlight, the moving appearance of which

seemed to bend its course towards the spot then occupied by them. Covered from view by the bluffy bank under which they had already seated themselves, the movements of the light were strictly watched.

Its near approach enabled our two friends to discover it to be borne by a tall and well-formed person, in British uniform, and without arms, save a short sword which hung gracefully at his side. In rear of him were four other men, one of whom was by the side of a female, who had hold of his arm, and who, from appearance, seemed to be laboring under great mental distress. A momentary pause ensued.

"It was near this spot," said the man bearing the torch-light, "that I saw him fall, covered with wounds and weltering in his own blood. Being pursued as was our company by that invincible body—Washington's cavalry, I had barely time to bid him farewell, and to give my promise that I would return here to-night with you, Mary, in search of him, dead or alive." In a few moments after that remark was made, and at a still nearer distance from our party, the man bearing the light, halted, saying:

"Here he is, and thanks to the Disposer of all human events is still alive!"

After some time spent in the emotions of grief and sorrow incident to woman's heart, a kind of litter was prepared upon which the wounded man was laid, and in a short time the party began to retrace their steps from whence they had come, leaving Laurence and Hyne in possession of a renewed topic of thought under the influence of which to prosecute their plans.

It was long before they could gain a position near enough to the out-posts of the British army, to enable

them to reconnoitre with even tolerable safety. At length the brow of a small hill, within a few hundred yards distance from the enemy's camp fires, presented itself to their view.

"Here," said Laurence, in a low tone of voice, "is the place at which we will establish our quarters, and at which we will report to one another our respective discoveries, whether favorable or unfavorable to our object in view."

Taking an opposite course, they were soon separated, and each one, on his lonely tour, was involved in attentive observation. Laurence had proceeded in a direction which, from the lights yet burning, he supposed to be the quarters of the commander-in-chief. All was silent. He looked to discover, then listened to hear; if to see or hear any one; the footsteps probably of the sentinel, as perchance he might by the crush of a leaf and other particles in his path, create such a noise as to enable him to know that he was near the prescribed route of one. Involved in deep thought, and intently listening to what occasionally saluted it, his keen ear caught the sound of a low, yet sufficiently audible, murmuring expression, as follows: "I should account it the chief pleasure of my life, were I in a situation to restore to his friends, and to his brethren in arms, the brave, generous, and noble-hearted Colonel Leftridge. That cowardly and unprincipled class of beings—the Tories — so numerously infesting this State, have at their own request, and I am sorry to add, permission of the commanding officer, his life in their hands. I detest such principles, and must condemn my countrymen, though my superiors, for such a mode of warfare."

Laurence was struck with admiration at a soliloquy so unexpected, and so much in favor of his designs. In an instant his every thought was at work to know how best to take advantage of what he had just heard. The first impetus of his anxious soul was to rush forward, regardless of position or circumstances, to the spot from whence the address emanated, and there to express a change of sentiment so entirely congenial with those he had just listened to; a moment's reflection, however, produced a better course. "No," said he, in almost a state of soliloquy himself, "to go forward will not do for the present. I shall seek Hyne—confer with him, and then return to this spot."

As he turned to retrace his steps to their place of rendezvous, the report of a gun attracted his attention, and as it was in this direction his fears were that Hyne had been discovered and shot. With cautious steps he bent his way to the place of their retreat, and when within a few yards of it, discovered his faithful sergeant standing under a part of a large rock, projecting from the hill. When he had gained their retreat, he asked Hyne in a whisper, "what discoveries he had made?"

"I have found," said he, "three places where there seems to be no guard, and have been back about ten minutes awaiting your arrival and orders, sir, I also heard the report of a gun, but cannot imagine the cause as all seems silent on the route I have been."

"That report I also heard, and became fearful lest the Tory faction or some other inimical to the cause of our nightly visit to this region, had sacrificed you to their assassin and cowardly-like principles. But let us be of good cheer, and endeavor not to purchase

trouble at retail in the anticipation of it, as is the nature of many; and when it comes in mass, which is soon enough, stand calm and firm under whatever misfortune it may entail upon us. I have better news," continued the major, "than that of which you have just spoken, yet dangerous and uncertain as ever, and have returned to consult and advise with you upon it." Here Laurence related what he had heard. The two friends mutually concurred in opinion, and in a few moments left their tentless camp for the spot which had a little before been occupied by Laurence.

In almost breathless silence and acute attention, they cautiously retraced the route, till they had arrived in sight of the light, still burning, which had attracted the attention of the Major, and turning a little to one side, took a position in a hollow gum tree, the undecayed part of which faced in the direction of the enemy's lines.

All nature seemed to be wrapped in profound silence, not a sound of feathered, nor of quadruped animated nature was heard, except the shrill voice of the cock in different sections of the adjacent neighborhood announcing the arrival of the midnight hour.

"I fear the success of our plan," said Laurence in a low whisper, "as it is now past twelve o'clock." He had scarcely made the remark when the footsteps of several persons were heard within a short distance of them, and apparently approaching the place of their concealment.

What to do they had no time to determine upon, and under the influence of sudden alarm, and utter despair seemingly awaiting them, thought their de-

signs frustrated, their anxious hopes cast to the four winds of heaven, and themselves in the hands of a merciless foe. Fortunately the approach was in the rear of their place of concealment; the persons were those of the relief guard of the British army going the "grand rounds." The command and word, halt! succeeded by the formal interchange of the countersign was given. In a few moments they passed on, and all again was silent.

"How much circumstances operate against us now," whispered Laurence. "I had thought on hearing it that the soliloquy emanated from some one kindly disposed toward Colonel Leftridge, and that we might venture to approach the person, whoever he might be, upon our return here. My impressions also were, that he whose voice I had heard might have been a sentinel; if so, the relief guard has supplied his place with that of another, and he doubtless, is now far beyond the most remote probability of ever being near the one or the other, or both of us again. The Allwise, however, is a merciful, as he is a mysterious being, in Him, therefore, I put my trust. To return to camp without the Colonel, will be a source of too much pain to his men, a great loss to the army and a constantly mortifying reflection to me."

"And to me, too," replied Hyne.

"Let us," continued the Major, "go to the camp of the enemy at reveille; report ourselves as Tories; pretend to have much to communicate; gain their confidence and the privilege of their camp; learn all we can relative to the colonel; ascertain what is his condition; how, if at all, confined; if guarded, by whom, and then conclude upon such a plan as a combination

of all or part of such circumstances, may again dictate for his rescue."

The morning star had risen, adding its brilliant light to the sparkling galaxy of bodies which had borne mute evidence of the untiring, as well as undaunted exertions of our forlorn hope!

"Let us now depart," said Laurence, "and go to the main road leading from Guilford, along it we will bend our course toward the head-quarters of the British commander, and be better able to pass undisturbed and as supposed Tories. Thus sauntering, we will allow ourselves just time enough to gain their camp at sunrise so as to commence our experiments in intrigue at as early an hour as possible.

They were on the point of leaving their last rendezvous—the hollow gum-tree—when the sound of a human voice attracted their attention.

"Thank heaven!" exclaimed Laurence, in an emphatic whisper, "it was the voice of the soliloquist we heard." All was again silent, and our two friends were as by magic, and as fixtures, standing in mute anxiety, one on each side of the entrance and natural door of their wooden tent.

They had not been long in that posture before their ears were saluted and their fancies of hope were fed upon the following exclamations:

"I detest cowardice as a quality unnatural to man. The Author of his existence has not placed at his command direct power over all the animal kingdom, and thus making him lord of the earth, without having bestowed upon him a superior intellect, the exercise of which is to show his greatness in obeying the will of his Maker, and in doing all the good he can. Upon

the principles for which I was created I have, then, a right to act, not to degrade but to elevate myself. I am, from circumstances equally unforeseen as beyond my control, a soldier, and to be a brave one is imperatively my duty. To desert the colors of my country is against my creed, and to betray her trust dishonorable; but to befriend a fellow being in distress is, I know, not only in accordance with the dictates of a conscience void of offence against God and man, but which affords a fund of pleasing reflection in the downhill of life. To befriend a brother soldier, though he be my enemy and in arms against me is—magnanimity of soul—as well as that of duty. And to do so without a departure from honor is what will afford me as much pleasure as it will him relief. This I have resolved to do, if the unfeeling wretches who hold him subject to their own disposal do not hang him as they would a dog ere I can effect my purpose. How strange and unfathomed are the mysteries of that Great Power, which rules and governs, not only the destiny of nations, but that of individuals also. Before I left England it was told to me by one of those who pretend to have a foreknowledge of futurity, that I should go to a distant country, in company with a large number of my own people, to fight; that we should be conquered and that our commander and his army should be taken prisoners. But before that event I would help a man of high rank, who would become one of our prisoners, to make his escape and arrive in safety among his people. So far as it relates to my being in the army, and where I had never expected to be, the prediction is fulfilled; and it appears that the time is at hand when I shall be

instrumental in the rescue of a man of doubtless merited worth amongst his people; whether the other prediction, the close of this war, will follow soon or late after, I may perhaps not live to see."

During the declaration of that, as yet, unknown being, our two friends listened with all the attention with which they were possessed. At its close, and in a low whisper, a consultation was held between them, resulting in a determination boldly to present themselves before him, whoever he might be, whose soliloquy had induced them to believe him friendly at least toward the unfortunate and distressed.

About ten steps from their concealment was the boundary of the sentinel's march, and just as he had come to the point at which he intended to wheel and retrace his steps, Laurence and Hyne stepped from the interior of their hiding-place and were in full view before him.

"Who comes there?" said the sentinel.

"Friends to the guard," replied Laurence.

"Advance friends and give the countersign."

"That we have not got."

"Stand!" replied the sentinel, as he threw himself in a position of defence, and bringing his musket to a level, "Who are you?" he continued.

"Americans," replied Laurence.

"Of the army?"

"Yes."

"What, and with whom is your business?"

"Our business is to speak with the sentinel on duty, and who now speaks to us; our object, to ask for and engage his generosity in an act of kindness in behalf of an unfortunate fellow soldier, though an enemy."

"What if I refuse you an audience?" said the sentinel.

"Then we are undone," replied Laurence.

"How so?"

"In being your prisoners and anticipated sufferers in common with our countryman and fellow soldier, Colonel Leftridge."

"What is it you wish of me?" continued the sentinel.

"Have we your word that you will not betray us, should you deny what we ask at your hands," replied the major.

"Do you believe that soldiers have honor?"

"Yes," returned Laurence.

"Then, as a soldier, I pledge you my solemn word."

"We thank you till a better reward is yours," replied Laurence.

"What are your names, and what rank do you bear?" inquired the sentinel.

"Major Laurence, second regiment of infantry, and Sergeant Hyne of company 'C.'"

"Advance and fear no danger," said the sentinel.

When they had come up to where the sentinel was, and had informed him of their design and entire wishes, he replied,

"So far, major, as that of your return to the American camp to-night is concerned, there is an impossibility; for it is now not more than two hours till daylight, and your detection would be inevitable. With regard to the condition of Colonel Leftridge, it is bad enough; and so much so, as when I think upon his treatment by my countrymen, the thought is pro-

duced that generosity is *no* longer a part and parcel of the ingredients of which Englishmen are composed. His wound, though a slight one, has never been dressed, with the exception of what little he has done to it himself since he was taken prisoner, and that was during the time he was before the officer of the day, a few hours after the engagement, and when he was transferred to the demon-like beings in whose hands he fell on the day of battle. He has been doomed by them to suffer death, and to die on a gibbet day after to-morrow at sunrise.

"The Tories have already erected his gallows, and by way of insult, add additional pangs to the sufferings of his gallant and high-toned spirit; their order is, to compel him in view of the wretched dregs of human nature, composing a company of Tories, to visit it three times a day. The order has been issued for the striking of our tents day after to-morrow also, when our army will march, as is the general opinion for York-town, in Virginia. The execution of the Colonel is designed for that day, in honor, as they express it, of the triumph of Lord Cornwallis over Green and his rebel army. The Colonel lies in an out-house, he is not guarded, but confined by a plentiful supply of strong rope; and I think as you are in your disguise as Tories, you may with much caution see him; set him at liberty, and bear him off without being known. For my own part, I shall render you every assistance that may be within my power, and that which I shall commence with, and which you are now most in need of, is to direct you where you can remain in security during the ensuing day, and with it to have refreshment and rest."

In a few minutes, and at a short distance from the place where their interview with the sentinel was held, they found themselves at the door of a small log hut, which by a gentle tap from their guide was soon opened. "Here," said he, "you can rest in safety and have something to eat during the day."

The sentinel was about to leave his guests to resume his station, when Laurence detaining him for a moment, said, "Soldier! to your kindness and generosity we are indebted, for not only our present security, with the additions of anticipated sleep and refreshment, but also for a strong hope in the accomplishment of our, now most dear object, the rescue from an ignominious death, the brave and generous-hearted Leftridge. You are about leaving us to return to the encampment, in which he lies bound as a prisoner; it becomes necessary, in your further purpose to serve us, that you should be put in possession of some signal, in the use of which before him, you will at once apprize the Colonel of your being his friend, and that they from whom you had obtained the sign, have properly endowed you with it: by this means he will be forewarned of our approach, and of the necessity there is of keeping down any excitement which our abrupt entry into his presence might occasion. For that purpose allow me to confer upon you a sign which when given to the Colonel, he will perfectly understand. It is this,"—placing his fore-finger perpendicularly across his mouth, "and one too, which has existed between us since the days of our earliest boyhood. One more detention," continued Laurence, "and I shall have done for the present. Your name and the regiment to which you belong?"

"James Withrow, eighth regiment, and company 'K,' of his Britannic Majesty's Troop of Light Infantry." So saying, the sentinel bowed gracefully and was soon out of their sight.

CHAPTER V.

The noblest feature of the mind is that of disinterested friendship.

THE first attention shown to Laurence and Hyne by the inmates of the log hut, was manifested by being seated at a small table, when they partook of excellently made coffee, several well-fried slices of ham, and some well-baked biscuit, "for all of which," as was said by the inmates of the hut, "they were indebted to Withrow, who, instead of continuing with his mess, received his rations and boarded with them.

In a short time after they had partaken of their breakfast, they were conducted into a small shed-roofed apartment, where stood from appearance, a clean and comfortable bed. The fatigue of the past night had exhausted their fund of stimulant excitement, and in a few moments the Major and Hyne, both in one bed, were in a sound sleep. It was near two o'clock, when they awoke, and shortly after were called to partake of a well-served up dinner. The remainder of the day passed in anxious expectation upon the anticipated events of the ensuing night.

"What," said Laurence to Hyne, "must be the thoughts of the general to-day! seeing that we have not

returned to camp by reveille, as were my expectations when we left."

"And what," replied Hyne, "must be the opinions of the regiment, as well as the whole army, all of which are by this time, doubtless, impressed with a belief that not only the colonel, but we also are lost."

"True," replied Laurence, "but the agreeable surprise, though longer accomplishing than I thought it would be when we left camp, which we will give them, will more than compensate all, for the uneasiness our prolonged absence, as yet unaccounted for to them, may have occasioned the regiment and the army. Night was approaching. The sun had withdrawn his brilliant rays, and the pale yellow mantle of twilight along the horizon, had begun a compromise between itself and the pervading influence of darkness, when their near, and now highly valued friend, Withrow, stepped into the door of the hut.

"What news do you bring us," eagerly inquired the major and his sergeant at the same instant, as they fixed their eyes intently upon him, anxiously waiting his reply.

"I have come," said Withrow, with a countenance indicating a thoughtful mood, "to spend a few moments only with you, for the present, and to inform you that all in relation to our plan is—'

"What! lost?" exclaimed the two Americans, as they sat in mute and anxious attention, listening to the recital of the gentlemanly English soldier.

"No," he replied, his countenance brightening as he spoke, "but as it should be, and that is a proper train for the rescue of the colonel, and, I hope, safe return of himself and friends to his general and countrymen in

arms. I took occasion to-day," continued Withrow, "to go with a piece of meat and bread in one hand, and a canteen of water in the other, to the consequential captain of the Tories, requesting permission to give what I then had in my hands to the colonel. 'He will soon be done with his now but empty title,' said the wretch, as he pompously, and in a would-be-great manner twirled his sword, walking from me with the remark, 'you have my permission to do so, if it is any gratification to you, to feed one who has now but a few hours longer to live.' Having but little inclination to be long in the presence of one so far beneath the character of a gentleman in his deportment, and a still less desire to listen any longer to his coxcombical remarks, I gave him a forced salute, and was soon and fortunately alone, in the presence of the colonel. Making use of the sign with which you have honored me, it seemed to have had the influence of electricity upon him, as in one instant a cheerful appearance mantled his cheek, and his before drooping spirits were roused to every sense of action. I left him, though, under the influence of hope and suspense, yet cheerful and composed. Now, sir," continued Withrow, with a pleasant smile, looking intently at the major as he spoke, "with due deference to my superior and fellow soldier's decision, I ask the command of our, it is true, small, but, I know, brave detachment, for this night only, and if allowed it, will proceed to issue my orders."

"With every emotion of my heart, and grateful acknowledgement of the kindness we have received at your hands, the command is yours. A brave, a generous, a noble-minded soldier, such as you are, deserves that and more," said Laurence.

"That must be," said Withrow, interrupting him, "a matter of—if at all—remote consideration; for, whatever I deserve for the performance of that which is my duty to the gallant in distress, or to the unfortunate in want, I am always compensated for by the pleasure I feel in doing so."

"Noble, generous Withrow," replied Laurence, "you are by nature, education, and I believe, birth, far above that class of beings, called gentlemen, in the costume of fine dress, few of whom have any just claim to the rank and title, but who are in point of fact, mere animals of the creation in the shape of man. This night the banner of your generous spirit is unfurled, and the brilliancy of a soul though cased in the bosom of one who deserves a better situation than that of being in the service of the enemies of America, has on this occasion been eminently shown to me; and come what may, I and my brave sergeant are under your command."

"You honor me," was the reply, as Withrow wiped with a white pocket-handkerchief a tear that stood ready to drop from the lower lid of his eye. "The present," he continued, "is not the time to speak of birth and education, but a momentous one to both of you as well as to Colonel Leftridge. I have made every preparation for his triumphal escape from his brutal enemies. You will at the appointed hour follow me in silence, to the place of his confinement, where I have so arranged it, as to cut the cords which bind him—place in his stead a dress intended to represent him lying stretched upon the floor, and from every appearance, to make it seem as if he himself was still there and bound. I have also procured for him a

kind of overcoat worn here by the disaffected of your countrymen; and likewise the words used for the countersign of our army for the next twenty-four hours, next following twelve o'clock to-night. It is "Terror." By the means thus in my power, we shall all reach this hut again in safety, and when you will be, as you have been and are now, out of danger, and from which humble abode, to retrace your steps to where, doubtless, you are by this time anxiously looked for. I must now go," continued Withrow, "and at twelve o'clock will again return to you."

So saying, and gently closing the door after him, he left the major and Hyne to reflect upon the orders of their new commander, and upon the excellence of character they had already discovered the practice of in him.

An excellent supper was prepared by their unknown hostess, and partaken of by them, after which our two friends remained in constant watchfulness, as well as anxious expectation, for the arrival of the silent and solemn hour of midnight. It arrived, and with it, their highly esteemed and invaluable friend, Withrow.

"I have," said he, smiling, "arrived at the appointed hour, and have consequently escaped, not only censure, but the danger of being court-martialled by my superior," as he looked adroitly at Laurence.

"I thank you," returned the major, "for the compliment conferred. You are now our all and entire hope, and upon you depends the accomplishment of one of the greatest achievements of our lives—the

rescue from an ignominious death of the brave and gallant Colonel Leftridge."

"Well, major," replied Withrow, "it is now time for us to be on our embassy. If surprised, I doubt much an honorable reception from those who are the would-be possessors of the prowesses in either one or more of the sentiments that are the invariable marks of distinction between man and man." Thus saying, he directed them to follow him, and in the next moment our detachment was again on its march toward the British encampment.

"There," said Withrow, in a whisper, and as he passed, at some distance from them, a very comfortable farm-house, "are the quarters of our commander-in-chief, and there," directing the attention of the major and sergeant to lights in the building, "are the two rooms occupied by the wife and only daughter of one of your distinguished countrymen and fellow-partisan warriors. If," continued he, "our chieftain knew what I am engaged in to-night, he would doubtless hang me upon the same gibbet erected for the execution of Colonel Leftridge. It is not often the case that the gallows is cheated out of its subject when preparations are so far made for its especial benefit, as they now are. But I intend on the present occasion to commit a robbery, and to take from its fangs one whom destiny never intended should meet death so ignominiously. Yonder," continued he, and after going a few yards further, is the house in which the colonel is confined."

In a little time the party halted behind a brush fence, which led up to the back part of the house.

"Stay here," said Withrow, 'till I go and recon-

noitre; perhaps some danger may be near, and if so, it is wise to be prepared, and to avail ourselves of the old, yet true, maxim in military affairs, that

"A timely retreat,
May save a defeat."

Thus saying, he bent his way with a cautious step, till he arrived at the back part of the house, and putting his ear to the window-shutter covering a blank sash, listened for a few moments, then returning to his two friends, said, "All is still, and we will now venture to enter the house."

At that moment, a glance of his keen and penetrating eye caught sight of a human being coming towards them, but on the opposite side of the fence from where they were.

In an instant, and by a token given his two friends, Withrow and they were prostrate upon the ground.

"There is danger here," he whispered; "but be perfectly still. I think myself acquainted with the cause of it, and, if I am not mistaken, it will not be long an obstacle to our proceedings."

After a moment's pause, with intent observation, he added, "I am right in the supposition; it is one of the officers attached to the company commanded by the marauding captain of the Tories, and who have Colonel Leftridge as their prisoner. Stay here, and be perfectly quiet. I must watch his manœuvres, in order to thwart his purposes, and those of his atrocious leader."

At this he left our two friends for the second time, and proceeded to the out-house again, as the building was called. Upon his arrival at the back of it, he

distinctly heard the officer in conversation with Leftridge. At this, he retraced his steps to where they were, and summoning Laurence and Hyne to follow him, returned to the rear of the house, when in a few moments after they heard the following dialogistical remarks pass between the Tory officer and Leftridge.

"Well, fellow, have you slept much to-night?"

"Whether I have or have not, is a matter of no consequence to you, nor those with whom you are associated," replied the colonel.

"You are more impudent than becomes you at such a time as this," said the Tory.

"How so?"

"Because you are now in the presence of one of your superiors, and whose party is far preferable to that one of which you are now an undone component."

"If you are one of that class, who are my superiors, and the party of which you speak preferable to the one of which I am a component, I pity alike your insolence and your blind zeal; and with regard to your party, must add, that I think it a greater honor to suffer the death which seems now to await me, than to entertain for one moment the hope of being delivered from it through their intercession. And," added the Colonel, "when I shall have ascended the scaffold, and there do behold for the last time the resplendent rays of the majestic luminary of day passing over the sons of freedom, and their just rights, I shall invoke the Author of all good to protect them in it; and in regard to the disaffected of my country, shall say to Almighty God, as One of old did,

"Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."

"The approach of death makes you penitent," continued the officer. "Have you sought for and obtained pardon of God for having dared to take up arms against his Majesty King George?"

"I have no sin of that kind to answer for; nor have I thought proper in my prayers to Almighty God to make mention of any allegiance, due from me to any earthly power, save that of my country and to my country's cause," replied Leftridge.

"You have seen the folly of those madmen in arms," continued the officer, "who have tried, but in vain, to war against our good king; you have likewise seen that Cornwallis has beaten your great General Greene, and that he also is the indirect cause of your present, as well as intended future punishment. You have it in your power now to retract and save yourself from the degraded death that awaits you, and that too at sunrise."

"I shall," replied Leftridge, "in being gibbetted, still live in the memory of my fellow soldiers in arms; and in the suffering of death, shall leave a monument of the love I have for the independence of my country; whose flag, when she shall have become victorious, will cause all such animals as you are to quake with fear; and to know better than to disturb by insult, as is now the case, the repose of the brave. With me on the present occasion, one of my greatest pleasures left, would be to see you depart from my presence, leaving me alone in the enjoyment of the few remaining hours of life, which agreeably to the orders of your chief, are yet mine."

"Well then," replied the would-be great, "I shall do as you wish I should, after making only one other remark."

"What is that?" said the worn, weary and gallant soldier.

"It is, that I shall have the honor of tying the knot which is to choke to death at sunrise the rebellious Colonel Leftridge." At this the officer withdrew, closing, but not locking the door after him.

Leftridge was now alone, yet exceedingly unhappy. The unexpected midnight visit of the officer; the suspense into which his whole mental faculties were cast; and the unknown fate of his three friends, bore heavily upon him.

The hour however of his delivery had come.

"Now," said Withrow, after having watched the entry of the officer into his quarters, "is our time. So saying, the three friends leaped the fence, entered the house, and by the dim light of a small lamp which the officer had left burning, appeared before, and with their signal saluted the just before desponding Colonel. All was silent, and in a few moments Leftridge was at liberty. An artificial sufferer was left in his place, bound in every particular as he had been, and covered, being ready to be put to any purpose which it might be adapted to at the expected, as well as appointed hour of sunrise.

Upon the artificial body was left the following sentence, written on a small scrap of paper taken from a pocket-book. "The sun will rise upon Colonel Leftridge as a freeman! while those who would have hanged him, are but mere machines (not men) in the service of an oppressor!"

In a few moments the pantomime ended, and the actors of it were on their peaceful and unmolested way to the hut of Withrow, and from whence to take their departure for the American camp.

Upon their arrival at the hut, Withrow gave instructions for a breakfast to be prepared, though, at rather an earlier hour than usual, for his guests. While it was in preparation, the parties conversed familiarly with one another upon the events of that and the preceding night.

In the meantime the application of warm water and soap, followed by a skilful dressing of the Colonel's wound, contributed much to his comfort, and strengthened his ability, to undergo their intended return to the American army that night.

In reply to some remark relative to him, Withrow said: "I have, gentlemen, nearly reached the climax of my present attentions, upon me to you; and soon we part, to meet, perhaps, no more. Be this as it may, I have, nevertheless, one boon to ask of all three of you; and that is, that you will remember and speak of, in your more happy moments, the soldier and his hut near the Battle-ground of Guilford."

"Such boons as that of which you have just spoken, are always being paid, by the grateful heart, and with us it shall surely be the case. Even then, my dear friend and deliverer, you will be but poorly compensated for your generosity and kindness to me in this night, and here permit me to ask, is there nothing more that we can do, or have done for you," replied Leftridge.

"Nothing, Colonel, for to live in the memory of the brave, out of the service cheerfully rendered

them to-night, is alone a sufficient compensation for me," said Withrow.

At this moment they were called to breakfast, and after having partaken of it, our three friends arose from the table with a view to departure.

"One thing more, Colonel," said the gallant soldier, "and then I shall have discharged the entire of my duty upon this memorable occasion; after which I shall bid you and your present companions farewell—for aught I know—during life." Thus saying, he went to a chest standing in one corner of the hut and, unlocking it, took from it a sword, belt and sash, a pair of spurs, and a very valuable gold watch. "These, sir," continued he, "are yours. To obtain them I have committed a theft, which in the estimation of those like from whom they were taken would, doubtless, have been enough to have sentenced me under court-martial to the punishment of, at least, the gauntlet, ball and chain, or, perhaps, solitary confinement. But with those whose bosoms throb with ingredients of a far more noble quality, the act on my part will be considered a just one, since it has enabled me to return them to their rightful owner. The night of the day," he continued, "upon which you were taken, was an entire scene of ravage and plunder—upon the living, upon the dying, and the dead of your countrymen and brethren-in-arms, among the herds of wretches by whom you were captured, and by whom you were, unheard, condemned to die. The outrage committed upon your person was more than I thought a generous foe, in arms against you, could permit. I could say nothing, because I was one amongst others of

my fellow-British soldiers ordered to the spot on special detail, and where I first discovered you. An eye witness of the scene, I beheld you stripped of the articles now before you, together with one other, and that was your purse, with its contents; the two last were out of my power to regain, as your funds were quickly distributed among those immediately around you, and your purse, with his share of your cash, pocketed by your intended executioner. I felt indignant at what was passing before me, and from that moment resolved to regain your property, retain it in my keeping, rescue you, and return the effects to their gallant owner."

Thus saying, he walked up to Leftridge, and handing him the sword, said, "Take this, Colonel, and the three articles accompanying it; continue to wear your sword in the defence of your country, till her enemies shall have acknowledged her independence, or till you die in trying to effect it. Should you survive her present struggle for liberty, and her people become free, my now parting wish is, that you and Major Laurence, when adverting to the events of the American Revolution, will occasionally associate with them your humble friend." Then turning to Hyne, he continued, "Sergeant, you are a subaltern in the army of that people, whose love of liberty, whose wholesome laws, and whose firm basis is a republic, will one day astonish Europe, and make kings shudder upon their thrones. Preserve, I pray you, your honor and integrity, as well as faithful adherence to your country's cause; think not, as does the empty-headed and would-be great man, that dress and splendor are the only necessary requisites to preferment, and to that of being gentlemen. In

such habiliments the most profound arrogance, impudence and ignorance are but too often found. The ape in mimicking the monkey arrives at the climax of but a shallow-brained intellect, and is still an ape. So, in like manner, are seen men following in the rank of those who they can only imitate, and adapting themselves to the manners and customs of others, they pass through life noticed, if at all, only for their ignorance."

"We," continued he, "are soldiers, and, I hope, friends, though fighting under different banners. This night may be our last, as it has been our second meeting; be that as it may, let us continue to act well our parts."

At that he shook hands with Hyne, and turning around, saluted the officers by a touch of his forehead with the back of his right hand. This done, he presented his hand to Leftridge, who, astonished at his dignified deportment, grasped it firmly in his own, saying, "Noble, generous man! you have this night placed me under innumerable obligations, all of which shall be lasting as life itself. What can I do in return for and such an occasion as the present represents? Only say, and whatever it may be, be it great or small, receive it but as a limited return for your kindness, letting it exist, for the time being, a memento between us of the obligations I am under to you."

"Nothing, colonel," was the reply.

"Then," said Leftridge, "if there is nothing acceptable by you, which I, nor those who, on this night, you have befriended, can command for you, I request, ere we part, perhaps forever, that you will accept of one thing from me."

"What is that, colonel?" resumed Withrow.

"My gold repeating watch," said Leftridge.

"I am honored," was the reply; "and to oblige one for whom I have felt so much unaccounted-for concern, sir—I will do so."

In a few moments the adieu was passed between them, and Withrow and our three Americans were soon on the way to the encampment of their beloved general, where, upon their arrival, all was full of joy and delight at their return, and restoration of Colonel Leftridge to the command of his regiment, to his men, and to his army.

CHAPTER VI.

The impetus to gratitude, is the sense of obligation under which it places us.

Soon after the termination of the events just recited, Cornwallis, at the head of his heretofore victorious army, was on his rapid march to Yorktown, in Virginia, where, unexpected as it was unknown, and never even thought of by him, he was soon to surrender his sword; and by which act, to announce to the world the acknowledgment of his sovereign, that "America was free and independent!"

Upon the sixth of October, 1781, the death-bell of English tyranny over the American people, began to toll its last peal; and, in a short time after, a cessation of hostilities ensued, followed by the surrender of Cornwallis to the chieftain of the American army.

The war was terminated, and the next thing was, the disbanding of the troops, and farewell of their commander to his officers and men.

That affecting scene took place, and, shortly after, officers and men of the army were seen bidding one another farewell; and they who had so gallantly achieved the liberty of their country, were winding their way to their respective homes, guaranteed to them by the "father of his country," the immortal and ever memorable Washington!

The tri-colored flag of their country, had not only stimulated them with a determined zeal in defence of its cause, but also, a purposed intent on the parts of Leftridge and Lawrence to perpetuate their then strongly cemented friendship for one another in future life.

For that purpose they mutually agreed that should they become fathers, (so far as union between their children might be concerned) it should be their first and greatest care to accomplish, however indigent the circumstances of either one or the other, or both, might be at the time of mature age of their children.

Nor did the compact stop there; the fidelity of Hyne, and the noble and disinterested deportment of Withrow in the time of danger, peril and need, to both of them, were matters of an equally weighty, and necessarily decisive settlement, by and between our colonel and major.

To find the soldiers just named, and to impart to them their mutual wish to be considered and used by them as their mutual friends in all the vicissitudes of their future lives, were the next objects of Leftridge and Lawrence.

With a view the better to effect the purposes intended, and to a speedy meeting with them, it was thought best, as the army had been disbanded, and not knowing what had become of Hyne, to put a notice in some newspaper published in Philadelphia, in order to attract his attention. To find Withrow was a matter involving a still greater uncertainty, and attended with considerable doubt, as the British troops were marching daily into the City of New York, from whence they were hourly embarking for England. Our two officers, however, had determined upon it, and the following letter was written:—

"To Mr. James Withrow,

Soldier in the service of His Britannic Majesty's 8th Regt., Comp. 'K.' City of New York.

"*Philadelphia, Dec. 9th*, 1783.

"Dear Sir:

"As a brother soldier, and after the termination of a long and bloody war, resulting in the liberty and independence of my country, I am desirous of repaying you, in some measure, for your gallant and noble conduct to me, in the latter part of that struggle—I allude to the three nights subsequent to the battle of Guilford.

"Your friendship, upon that occasion, merits my gratitude; which, with me, knows no limit. My life was at the disposal of my own countrymen, in arms against me; and you, a noble, a magnanimous and generous-hearted foe, at the risk of your own life, saved that of mine.

"I am in ignorance of where to find you, and hence

this letter; which, as you will perceive, is directed to you at New York. Should it reach you there, I shall be most happy in a visit from you, before your departure for the land and home of your birth.

"You will find me at the 'Franklin Hotel,' where I shall remain until the 25th inst., when I shall leave here for my home and intended residence, in the western part of Virginia.

Very truly yours,
"GEORGE LEFTRIDGE,
"(late) Colonel U. S. A."

This letter was mailed for New York, and the next morning the following "Card," appeared in the "Philadelphia Herald of Liberty" over the signature of Leftridge, in the following words:

"Sergeant Samuel Hyne, late of the Army of the United States of America, Second Regt. of Infantry and Co. 'C,' is requested to call, with as little delay, after seeing this, as may be possible for him, at the 'Franklin Hotel,' in this City, and oblige his friend,

"GEORGE LEFTRIDGE,
"late Col. U. S. Army.

"*Philadelphia*, 10*th of Dec.*, 1783."

In a few days after the appearance of this brief request to Hyne, our Colonel received the following letter:

"*New York*, 14*th Dec.*, 1783.

"DEAR SIR:

"It is much easier for me to feel than to attempt describing the pleasure enjoyed upon the receipt of

your favor under date of the 9th inst. In it you have done me the honor to say that you wish to repay me in some way or other for the services I rendered you in the first three nights after the hard fought battle of Guilford.

"Permit me to say in reply, that the happiness I then felt in rendering you the service, and, I flatter myself, in being the prime means of your restoration to your country and to her army, is the only compensation that I then did or can at the present time look for or accept of.

"As relates to your desire to see me, I had, before receiving your letter, come to the conclusion of trying to find, if possible, three soldiers, and allow me here to add, brave men of the American army, the memory of whom I shall ever cherish as highly esteemed friends, in the persons of Colonel Leftridge, Major Laurence, and Sergeant Hyne.

"To-morrow I shall receive my discharge from service in the British army, and having determined to make your country my future home, and in so doing to identify myself with those belonging to the Republic of America, I shall, with as little delay as possible, go to Philadelphia, where you shall be called upon with great pleasure by,

"Truly your friend,

"JAMES WITHROW.

"COL. GEO. LEFTRIDGE, Philadelphia, Pa."

CHAPTER VII.

The benevolent act from feeling, not ostentation.

At the period of which I am speaking, though one in which America was acknowledged as free and independent by not only the government of England, but by those also of all Europe, an unavoidable as well as unlooked for consequence grew out of the Revolution; and that was the want of means within the reach of Congress to clothe and pay her troops. This almost death-like dilemma was often a source of horror and despair to the officers as well as men; and when they were mustered out of service, many a poor fellow whose love of country alone made him fight and bleed cheerfully in her defence, had not at the close of the war a sufficiency to pay for a breakfast.

Leftridge and Laurence were, happily, not of that class; they were men who, though born in the United States, had had large estates left them by relations in England, as well as handsome properties in expectancy from their fathers, who emigrated among other wealthy Englishmen, one to New York and the other to Virginia, at an early day.

Withrow nor Hyne had not as yet been seen or heard of. The evening of the twenty-third of December had arrived, and our two officers had already begun to arrange their affairs preparatory to a departure, separation, and journey to their respective homes. Seated by a comfortable fire, and being in a loqua-

cious humor, reviewing the scenes of their boyhood, and those involved in that of the war just closed, the subject turned upon their two absent friends.

"Gratitude," said Leftridge, "is an ingredient of my nature of which I am most proud; and how far the circumstances under which it is due from me to Withrow extends, are as equally incalculable as my admiration of him is unbounded. When he comes, I purpose making him an offer, in testimony of my regard. I think the offer exceedingly small, in proportion to the claims he has upon me; and little, in that light, as I know the offer is, I sincerely hope that it will be accepted by that obscure, but, as I cannot help thinking, well-descended man. His generosity and kindness are what I admire; and the tincture of eccentricity interwoven with and shown in all his acts, is a trait of character in him with which I am most pleased: it is of that cast soaring so far above the ordinary, that I like, instead of being disposed to censure the practice of in him.

"Some convulsion, perhaps, in the affairs of his life, has brought it upon him; and his retiring, yet gentlemanly and polite deportment added, will, doubtless, make him an agreeable companion, to those who may become acquainted with and know him. Men read books in order to improve and strengthen their minds, yet the immediate intercourse with his fellow, enables man to read man, and thereby to arrive at an immediate conclusion upon the use the work has been, is, or may be to him. I purpose studying Withrow, and to merit, as far as I can, his high-toned and disinterested friendship already manifested for me."

"In the delineations you have given of the British

soldier, you remind me of yourself," replied Laurence: "and now tell me," continued he, "what do you purpose doing for him?"

"I shall," replied the colonel, "offer him one of my farms in Carolina; and from a desire to perpetuate more forcibly his recollection of me, I shall give him the one occupied by Lord Cornwallis as his headquarters after our last battle in that state, with him."

At that moment a servant entered, saying that "two gentlemen were below, desirous of seeing Col. Leftridge and Major Laurence."

"Ask them to walk up, and do you show them our apartments," was the reply. In a few moments, Withrow and Hyne entered their room.

"I congratulate you, gentlemen, upon the liberty and independence of your country," said the former, as he put his right forefinger across his lips.

"And so I do, too," said the latter, "while I am, also, happy in once more beholding my Major and my Colonel, under whose command I have helped to save my country as well as to conquer her enemies."

Their salutations were warmly returned by the two officers, and with all that cordiality of feeling on the part of Leftridge which is alone the accompanying impetus of a noble soul and a genuine sense of gratitude for favors conferred.

"In what way have you met with one another, and to what lucky chance are we indebted for the pleasure of seeing you both here at one and the same time?" said Leftridge.

"Two days since, and about sunset, sir," said Hyne, "I arrived in the city, after having seen your kind card inviting me to call upon you. Having no

acquaintance from whom I could learn any localities of the city, I wandered from place to place till after dark, trying to find the 'Franklin Hotel.' When I would ask for it, and would tell them of whom I inquired, who I wished to see there, the general reply was—the question of, 'Have you any money?' Upon being answered in the negative, they would say, 'Such a poor looking devil as you are, and in the tattered dress of a 'continental soldier,' is more fit to see your officers in a barrack-room than in a hotel.' I would sometimes ask, 'Can you let me stay by your fire in the bar-room for the night?' 'No!' was the reply, with the additional want of feeling: 'we have no desire to accommodate, nor spare place for such looking fellows as you are!' Such were the usual replies to all my solicitations; and thus I wandered till the clock announced the arrival of midnight hour. I was cold and hungry, and had not at that time, but two shillings in my purse.

"With my knapsack on my back, in which I had two old shirts, and my discharge from service, I stepped into a small inn on the quay, as I was on my return to the ship I came in, and where I proposed asking for a hammock, to sleep upon the remainder of the night. In the inn I got a cold supper, and the privilege of lying by the fire. Here I was reduced to but an only shilling, and early next morning was again on my search for this hotel. Not knowing where to go nor from whom to ask further questions, I continued wandering from corner to corner, and from street to street. For, believe me, sir, my fund of spirits as well as money being exhausted, I had but little inclination to make my feelings any longer a necessitated debtor to

the insolence of an upstart, nor to that class of cold-hearted beings, similar to those I had met with the evening before. You can guess my astonishment, as well as truly great and surprising pleasure I felt when passing the Emigrant's Hotel, on the corner of Fourth and Walnut streets, I was hailed by our mutual friend. I did not know him, as he had thrown off the red and had put on that dress of blue broadcloth, in which he now appears before you. But upon his giving me the Guildford signal, I immediately ran to where he was standing amongst a number of others on a piazza, and as I grasped his hand in my own, I exclaimed, with the impulse of the moment, 'The Hero of Guilford!' The remark immediately attracted the attention of those who were present. Withrow discovered it, and soon conducting me into his room, would not let me come from it, till he had sent out and had brought to me, the suit of clothes, with the boots and hat I now wear; besides ten doubloons, which with his own hands were put into my pockets, accompanied by the remark of 'they will dissipate the future appearance of gloom, which a few moments ago pressed so heavily upon you.' I have now, "continued Hyne, "told you in as brief a manner as I could, by what means I have the pleasure of seeing you on this occasion, and by one more remark, shall inform you that it is to the kindness of Withrow, that I am indebted for the comforts I now enjoy."

"You are by no means my debtor," replied Withrow, "for, whatever I have done for you, was an act of duty. Agreeably to my opinion, man cannot please Deity better than when he is imitating him in works of disinterested benevolence. His sun shines alike

brilliant upon all; and the products of the earth are, alike bountifully bestowed upon the generous as upon the ungenerous. The avaricious and isolated being who dares not, for fear of offending his God, Lucre, disturb the position of a single shilling, in his to him, death's hour, worthless coffers, is a mere automaton, moved by no feeling whatever, but that of accumulating wealth, for the benefit of those who will not thank him while living, nor bestow, as a tribute of respect to his memory, a single thought upon him when he is gone. And to carry my convictions of human life still further, I would add, that the most ordinary of the creation in the shape of man, can, if he is not an entire idiot or fool, burn the incense of flattery before those by whom he may have been befriended. But let that friend become the victim of adversity, then the scene is at once changed, and the next thing is, that he is not only forsaken, but lives forgotten and unknown by the very ones who had before felt and experienced his kindest attention.

Here Withrow was for a moment silent, when, resuming his discourse and addressing Leftridge, he continued; "I have, sir, for years, lived a recluse. Dissatisfied and soured at what I thought the injustice of others toward me, I sought a distant land in the disguise, not choice, of a soldier. I enlisted and Italy was the destined theatre of action for my regiment. At a moment least expected by me, it was ordered to America; and the high regard in which I have ever held your countrymen, made me recoil at the idea of being one of their armed foes. I had long before that event, imbibed the sentiments and feelings of my countryman towards your people—of the illustrious Pitt, and

had already come to the conclusion that your claims on England were just ones; and that your cause of remonstrance was based upon a course of reason, equally firm and fixed, as is now the established liberty and independence of your country. It is unnecessary for me to recite to you the duties of a soldier; I was bound, and was obliged to obey, yet, let me assure you, that against your countrymen, I merely walked my duties, or in other words, was invariably lenient as my duty could possibly allow me to be. For that kind of feeling, suffice it to say, I had to exchange the land of my birth for that of another. I am now an adopted citizen of your country, and where I purpose spending the remainder of my days. Among the incidents falling in my way, I have had the pleasure as well as honor of being an assistant in the saving of your life, an event more assignable to accident alone than to any other, and to which, I may one day or other, advert. In my possession is an honorable discharge from the service of my country, and I am now in accordance with your request, again before you, to know your wishes, and to merit still further the friendship and confidence of yourself and Major Laurence."

CHAPTER VIII.

The germ of philanthropy is the discard of self, in the promotion of the happiness of others.

THE unembellished, though frank and high-toned sentiments with which the now English-American

citizen, expressed himself to his regained three friends, occasioned, for a time, that kind of silence involving thought, intermixed with pleasing, as well as sad reflection, all of which was broken by the Colonel, as follows:

"We have all listened, Mr. Withrow, with much pleasure, to the laconic history you have thought fit to give us of yourself. In the latter part of it there has occurred an act of such unrivalled friendship, extended towards me, as to make nothing in my power too good or too valuable withheld from you. You are a stranger in our land, known by but few, and those few are the three now before you. As a stranger, therefore, amongst us, it becomes me to be foremost in showing to you that hospitality and friendship, which though it may fall short of reward for, may in some measure convince you, of the high regard I have for the preserver of my life and liberty. You have abandoned your own, and have become a citizen of our country. The motives you had for leaving England, it is not my intention to inquire into, nor my province to know, unless voluntarily communicated to me by you. Believe me, then, from what I have just said, to be sincere in my professions of friendship; and in testimony of it, permit me to offer you, by way of present, a small start in the land of your new home; the acceptance of one, and either of my offers will have a tendency to give you a comfortable subsistence."

"To what do you allude?" inquired Withrow, interrupting him.

"To a permanancy for life, and your children after you," replied Leftridge.

"What! sir, to settle an estate upon me?"

"Listen to me until I shall have finished my proposals, and then give me your reply."

"You will please excuse me for the interruption," said Withrow, "and rely upon my silent attention for the future."

"I have," resumed Leftridge, "a landed estate in the South, and upon one of my farms was the head quarters of your late commander-in-chief, Lord Cornwallis. In the city of Charleston I own a square of ground; all of which, nearly, is built upon in Market Street. I own, in addition to that, a large portion of the wharf, and the buildings upon it. Should you think proper to do so, and will go into Charleston and commence business, I will advance you a capital of three thousand pounds, with a lot, and house well furnished to live in; or if it should suit your taste and inclination better to go at farming, take the property of which I have just now spoken; it is yours, and all that is necessary for you to do, in order to possess it, is to accept this deed, which I have had made out, preparatory to your looked for visit to me on the present occasion. My offers, continued he, are now before you."

"Am I, then sir," said Withrow, "in the presence of the owner of that farm upon which you were confined?"

"You are," replied the Colonel, "and had I been known there as such, would doubtless have been much more severely treated than I was; for Cornwallis himself, would have had the disposal of my execution upon the gibbet; followed by having me quartered. He knew the strength of my arm and the terror of my

sword, and had it not been for the timely arrival of Tarleton and his troop, he would, at least, on a former occasion, have been in my keeping as a prisoner of war. He has, however, fallen, and his surrender to our chieftain has buried all animosity; and were I to see him to-day, should give him as cordial a shake of the hand as if no hatred had ever existed between us."

"Were the ladies," said Withrow, "found on this farm, and who were unable to make their escape, before our army took possession of it, relatives of yours?"

"They were," replied the Colonel.

"In what degrees?" resumed Withrow.

"My mother, my widowed sister, and her daughter, about sixteen," answered Leftridge.

"Is it Miss Rayford to whom you have reference?"

"The same."

"She, sir," resumed Withrow, "is a charming girl, and the prototype of her refined and ladylike ancestry. And let me here tell you," continued he, "that I have had the additonal pleasure of seeing others beside yourself of your family."

"Then you have seen my mother, my sister, and my niece?"

"I have, sir, had that pleasure, as well as honor," replied Withrow.

"By what means did that take place?" inquired the colonel.

"That of being stationed at the head of a file of men, and stationed at your mother's door, where I had the honor to keep at a distance from them many an insolent and cowardly Tory."

"Had you any conversation with them while on duty there?"

"Only as their orderly, sir," replied Withrow. "And now," continued he, the reason and mystery attached to it is clearly developed, which I then could not solve, of why the ladies were so often sombre, and so much concerned at the capture of, as they termed him, 'the Partisan Colonel.' I had often to carry messages, and frequently written ones, from your family to the commander-in-chief, all of which were received from your sister, or from her (excuse the expression from me,) her lovely daughter, but none from your mother. All on the subject, from time to time, of their comfort whilst prisoners. The cause of their sorrow and dismay I should like to have known, but to have been inquisitive would have been beyond my province. I am now in possession of the cause of their concern, and am, happily, well acquainted with the, then as well as now, gallant subject of it, in the person of the 'Partisan Colonel.' And here, too," continued Withrow, "I am, sir, reminded of a singular trait in your mother's character, and of which I have remained in entire ignorance with regard to its true meaning till now. It was that of putting her forefinger perpendicularly across her lips upon being spoken to by strangers."

"That signal was to her, as well as it has been to me," replied the Colonel, "one of much utility, but which, when I shall have introduced you to, and you shall have again been in her presence, will no longer be a necessary precaution with her, so far as you, and such friends as you are, are concerned."

"You honor me, Colonel," replied Withrow.

"No more so than you deserve, and richly merit," was the reply.

"I can only thank you for another mark of your regard. And here permit me, sir," continued Withrow, seeming somewhat confused, "to ask where is your family now?"

"On their way to my Fotheringay Estate in the mountains of Viginia," replied Leftridge.

"Is Miss Rayford, your mother, and sister, well?"

"They were at the date of the last letter from them."

"And your father—where is he, sir?"

"In Heaven, I hope," said Leftridge. "After leaving the army, and bidding adieu to his brother partisans in the South, he, accompanied by the family, were on their way to Fotheringay, but before reaching it he died.

"The will of Almighty God," replied Withrow, "is certainly wise and just, as it is mysterious to man. Yet it seems hard that he should not have been allowed to meet, here, with the rewards due in common to him and others of his brave countrymen, for a while, at least, after their noble struggles."

Here the dinner hour was announced, and our four friends repaired to the dining-room. After they had dined, and returned to their apartment, the conversation turned upon that of a preparatory for and departure of the two officers, to wind in their turn also, the weary way toward their respective homes.

"I do not wish to press it upon you," said the Colonel, addressing Withrow; "and I hope you will excuse me for again adverting to the proposition I

made you this morning, to which I have not as yet had the pleasure of hearing your reply. For I know," continued he, "that it is the intention of Major Laurence to make proposals of a similar nature to our much valued and tried friend, Mr. Hyne."

For some time Withrow seemed absorbed in thought, with his head a little inclined forward, and his fine and expressive blue eyes intently fixed upon the floor; he appeared to have forgotten that any one was near him. Then, bringing his body to an erect position upon his chair, his whole deportment wearing an easy, graceful, and dignified appearance, with his watch in his hand, he said: "This article, Colonel, was presented to me by you, at a time when I possessed, as I believe I do now, one of the highest places in your recollection, as a true, and, believe me, as far as my services are concerned, unchanged friend. As long as I live, it will remain with me, as a memento, small in size, but great in value, of one upon whose life and liberty I placed a higher value than I did upon my own; but from what unforeseen cause, I was not then, nor am I able now to solve. A mysterious Providence may one day, sir, make my services to you an advantage to me: but as it now is—the pledge of our friendship, at present, in this hand," (extending it as he spoke,) "is all I can accept of. Your kind offers are certainly flattering to me in an eminent degree, and are highly calculated, were I so disposed as to accept of them, to lay a solid basis for the procurement of wealth and ease for me and mine, as you have been pleased to express it. Let me assure you, that I have never entertained a wish to be rich; but that I should like to have a competency during life, I

shall not pretend to deny. For my own part," he continued, "I have no other thought now, but to remain single during the remainder of my greatly variegated and checkered life; thus far, more freely spent in the service of others than in that of my own. And all I may probably ask at your hands, is—that should I ever become destitute, and in want of the ordinary requisites of life, you will then lend an assisting one to him who has, at the peril of his own, saved your life, and of which he will ever be pleasantly reminded when seeing this watch."

Leftridge expressed, as he felt, much regret at the refusal of the offers made his friend, and after having attempted a second time, but in vain, to get an acceptance to his proposals, said—

"Withrow, your fixed purpose astonishes me; and the calm indifference with which you speak of and look upon everything like that of wealth, argues a degree of eccentricity rarely seen, and but little known. That I feel myself bound by every tie of honor as well as that of gratitude, to contribute at all times to your wants and necessities, and, in short, to make your necessities my own, is what I shall ever feel proud of the permission to do. And now, permit me to add, that there are two things which I hope you will not deny me, by way of a request and gratification to my feelings."

"What are they, Colonel?" said Withrow.

"First that you will allow me the pleasure of having a suitable engraving put upon the back of your watch, relative to your gallant behavior and disinterested friendship to me. And secondly, that you will go hence with me and make my house your home

until you will have settled upon your future course in America," replied Leftridge.

"Your first request, sir," resumed Withrow, "I shall unhesitatingly comply with. And upon the second one, as you will not start yet for two days at least, I must ask a few hours to reflect upon."

At this he handed to the colonel his watch, and addressing Hyne, said, "It is now time that I should return to my lodging, will you do me the favor to accompany me?"

"You do not intend remaining there?" said Laurence.

"No, Major, not longer than to settle my bill, after which we will return here."

"It is sometimes not convenient," said Leftridge, smiling, "for soldiers to pay their bills."

"True," replied Withrow, "but I have the pleasure to say, that on the present occasion, it is not the case with me, as his Majesty's paymaster, at the time I obtained my discharge, took my receipt, on account of back pay due me, for three hundred pounds, paid in gold." Thus saying, the two soldiers took their hats and left the room.

CHAPTER IX.

Ingenuousness of heart is the talisman of all excellence of soul.

"THE proud and independent spirit which animates the bosom of that man," said Leftridge, as Withrow half closed and left the door, "binds me from some

unknown and strange infatuation still closer to him; and impels an unaccounted for inclination within me to watch over his future destiny in this country. Every gesture and every word he articulates pronounces him to have been born of a parentage high-minded and noble as he is himself. I shall insist upon his going with me, and shall I hope, one day or another, be enabled to solve the mystery that now envelops him. Come, Major," he continued, "let us go in search of an engraver; but stop, before we go I wish your counsel. What inscription do you think most appropriate to be put upon this watch, once mine, but now the property of the most eccentric of the eccentric, and still clever fellow Withrow?"

"In words do you mean?" asked Laurence.

"Yes."

"If you leave it to my dictation," continued the major, after a pause, "I would recommend the following sentence, which from the names mentioned, will adapt itself to all the persons engaged in your rescue on the occasion of which it will speak."

"What is it?"

"Wait a moment and you shall see," replied the major, as he had seated himself and was in the act of writing at the table. "It is this:

"Presented to James Withrow, Esq., as a token of respect for his gallant and disinterested friendship, in aiding and assisting Major William Laurence and Sergeant Samuel Hyne in their rescue of Colonel George Leftridge, at the battle of Guilford Court House, South Carolina, May the 8th, 1781."

"How do you like it?" said Laurence, as he finished reading.

"Well," replied Leftridge.

"Does it agree with your taste?" continued Laurence.

"Much, indeed," was the reply. "And now," continued the colonel, "let us go."

They had not proceeded far in their search, before they had arrived at the shop of an engraver, and after having had an understanding with him, upon the price for which the work was to be done, and the time at which they were to call for it, they left the watch and the slip of paper containing the sentence, and passed on to the post-office.

"From the date of my letter to my mother, it is now time for me to receive a letter from some one or more of them at home—particularly as I wish to purchase a few articles by way of presents to Julia, before I leave the city," said Leftridge.

As he expected, he received two letters, one from his mother, and the other from his niece. It was then sunset, and just as they had arrived at the hotel, they were met by Withrow and Hyne.

In a few moments the four friends were in their apartment, but had scarcely reached their seats before the signal for supper was heard.

"Well, gentlemen," said Leftridge, after they had returned to their room, "while you are engaged talking upon the events of the past day, I shall read my letters.

Thus saying, he seated himself by a table, and drawing a lighted candle, which had been placed upon it, close to him, he was for some time intent upon reading a lengthy and closely written letter.

After he had read the first one, he was heard to say

to himself, "All is as it should be; my mother is correct in her opinions upon it, and her son will ever sustain her in them." Then folding and laying that letter down, he took up the next one, and carefully breaking its seal, was soon intently engaged in its perusal.

Within the time occupied by Leftridge, in attending to his letters, Laurence had made proposals to Hyne, in offering a copartnership to him in a mercantile establishment, which he proposed opening in the city of New York, as soon as the then unsettled condition of commerce could be placed upon an amicable basis between England and the United States.

"I am, sir," said Hyne, "destitute, and have but one species of capital left, at my command, to unite with yours; and that is—that of an honest integrity, and an untiring exertion, on my part, to facilitate and carry out to your approval, your friendly proposition and kind offers to me; all of which, shall be as thankfully, as it will be devotedly, attached to your pecuniary capital."

"Your acceptance of my proposal, Mr. Hyne, is all that I desire, and for the balance leave that to my management," said Laurence.

"I accept, and am at your service," was the answer.

"You will, then," continued Laurence, "be in readiness to leave here day after to-morrow, and accompany me to my future home, in the city of New York."

"Certainly, sir," returned Hyne, "and as the society of my good Colonel, and my no less esteemed Major, with that of my true friend, Withrow, is too valuable to lose for the short time we shall be together, by my proposed absence, no other quarters shall be sought

for, than those furnished in the hotel while they remain here. I shall, therefore, keep my knapsack packed—think myself under the Major's orders, and hold myself in readiness to strike my tent, and when the word is given—march."

"You have still a reminiscence of army discipline about you," said Laurence, smiling.

"Soldiers, sir, are not very apt to forget those matters in which they have been so long drilled, particularly when in presence of one whom they respect and esteem; and when they shall have seen the change of position from that of command to that of fellow-citizen and friend, as you manifest yourself to me, on the present occasion," replied Hyne.

"I thank you, my dear sir, and in future the true practice of a sincere friend to you, shall take the place of all former command I have had over you. Particularly," continued the Major, "when I see men of such intrinsic worth as that of which you are possessed, leaving the army of their country, without pay, and without a murmur. And here (handing him ten eagles) take this as an earnest of my intentions."

At this unexpected good fortune, Hyne was as much astonished as he was grateful, and immediately addressing himself to Withrow, who had been engaged in reading during the conversation between the Major and him, observed, "An honest man is said to be the noblest work of God. To be an humble member of that class of my fellow men, has been, as it shall continue to be, the grand aim of my life." So saying, he laid upon the table the amount which his friend had advanced him.

"What does this mean?" said Withrow.

"What it is intended for; the payment of my just debt, with my sincere thanks for your kindness," replied Hyne.

"So far as your thanks are concerned," said Withrow, "if it is any satifaction to you, I will receive them; but with regard to the sum advanced you by me—it is yours—and the most signal favor you can in future bestow upon me for it, is, that you will never mention its repayment again. And," he continued, "since you have quoted Pope to illustrate more forcibly your ideas of correctness, allow me also to do the same, in carrying out my purpose, in humbly imploring Almighty God to

> "Teach me to feel another's woe;
> To hide the fault I see;
> That mercy I, to others show,
> That mercy show to me."

Here Leftridge, who had been too busily engaged in reading family affairs, by way of letter, to attend much to what had passed between his friends, called their attention to one paragraph contained in the letter of his niece to him, and which he read to them as follows:

"I cannot but remember distinctly, the well-known as well as expressive features of that philanthropic man—the English soldier, who stood as 'Orderly' at our door. And from the subsequent events, in which he has acted so conspicuous a part, I am impressed with the opinion, and which, I must confess, is more agreeable than otherwise, to me, that he is the descendant of some family of high respectability in his own country. I would that his condition in life were a better one, and though I am not, as I know of, a predestinarian, I cannot divest my mind of the impres-

sion, indelibly fixed upon it, that he was a means sent, under the supervision of the All-wise Disposer of human events, as a protector to us, as well as that, of the savior of your life."

A crimson glow, always the attendant of sudden and unexpected praise to the virtuous mind, had already mantled the cheek of Withrow, as he sat for a moment confused and not knowing what reply he should make in answer to what he had just heard. tnn

The two officers, as well as Hyne, discovering his confusion, Laurence quickly observed, "Come, Mr. Withrow, you are not now in the presence, nor under the idea of being so, of an enemy armed with muskets. But it seems as if you were in doubt upon what course you will pursue, in order to vanquish, though it be for a short time only, the inroads making upon your *breast-works*, by that celebrated warrior—Cupid.

"I thank you, Major, for the timely relief afforded me, under your command," replied Withrow. "And now, sir, addressing the Colonel, as the representative of Miss Rayford, I beg you to receive my most cordial thanks for the honor she has conferred upon me in remembering the British soldier with kindness, and that growing out of events connected with his duty, which sir, whenever ladies are concerned, shall ever be performed by me, with strict intent to please.

"It is unnecessary for me to do so," replied the Colonel, "as you will, I hope, shortly see her yourself. In that event, you can better express your feelings on the subject of her eulogy upon your kindness to us, than I can."

The remainder of the night, till long after twelve o'clock, passed in a general conversation between our

friends upon the different scenes of life they had witnessed, and upon their plans and views relative to the future. In the course of conversation, an allusion was made by Leftridge to the night of his escape, in reply to which his three friends were interestingly communicative.

Here Laurence took occasion to ask Withrow to explain the reason of his soliloquies, and that of his being longer on guard than usual, the night previous to the one in which the Colonel was set at liberty.

"I shall do so with a great deal of pleasure, gentlemen, and shall endeavor to make my recital of the circumstances attending the two events, as interesting to you as your remarks upon different subjects might have been pleasing to me," replied Withrow.

Then commencing, he said:

"The night previous to the battle of Guilford, our army, some distance from the scene of action, and not being detailed for any service, I was in my tent, and had gone to bed, long before tatoo. I could not sleep soundly, and that portion of it which was allowed me, was greatly interrupted by the appearance of apparitions. All seemed to have left me but one, and when I would alternately awake and fall asleep, again the same form presented itself. I thought it to be a lady, apparelled in rich costume, bearing a wreath of snow-white flowers in one, and an elegantly worked American flag in the other hand. From the right shoulder, extending across to her left side, was very gracefully suspended an elegantly variegated sash, of a red, white and blue color, the white parts of which were interspersed with a superior order of jet.

"After repeated attempts to get within speaking dis-

tance of me, she at last succeeded, and making immediate use of the position gained, said, 'You behold in me one, destined to watch over the fate of that country, against which you are now an armed foe; you are not so in heart, but, from the force of circumstances; consequently, I have ventured to approach you. A battle is near at hand, in which the supernatural power, before whom I am but an agent, has decreed you as set apart to aid and assist one of your fellow-mortals—though an enemy, to make his escape from impending death. You shall have judgment to conceive, wisdom to devise, and power to execute that event. Such were the strange and unaccounted-for impressions with which the little sleep I got was accompanied; and at reveille I arose, not refreshed, but languid and full of reflection, upon the singular vision I had had. I had began to think it but a vision, Colonel, until I beheld you, and the indignant feelings the scene created, produced the thought that you may have been the 'fellow mortal,' referred to in my visionary lady. And how far her predictions may be construed, as having reference to you, subsequent realities have enabled you to determine. I had settled upon your release, and for that purpose had left my mess, and had taken my board with the man and woman in the hut, both of whom understood me. My plan was to have an interview with you in the best way I could, and to bring you to that place from whence you, and them passing as a poor tory family, were to set out for the American army. Nothing however seemed to forward my scheme, and in a moment of desponding hope, an English soldier and his wife, to whom I was under some obligations, came to

solicit the favor of me, that I would stand his tour that night as well as my own, as they wished to go to the battle-field in search of a wounded brother. I could not refuse, and was accordingly placed on guard at the spot, where you, Major, and Mr. Hyne, first beheld me; and where the variety of matter then occupying my mind caused, what you have been pleased to term, my soliloquies. To which perhaps may be, correctly attributed, my just finished and brief explanation of them."

"The nocturnal movements of those times seem to have been full of surprise and uncertainty to all of us," said Laurence. "For the visit of the soldier and his detachment to the battle-field, had like to have been the cause of our capture, as we were within a few steps of them when the object of their search was discovered. What became of him? What of the Colonel's intended escort? as well as of our landlord and lady of the hut? and what, do tell us, became of the Colonel's substitute for the gallows? All these must be familiar subjects to you, and of which you can now speak unreservedly."

"To the man and his wife of the hut, I gave all the cash and some few valuables I had about my person, when our army left their neighborhood. The English soldier recovered of his wound, and has returned with the army to England. With regard to the Colonel's substitute, much was said, and many conjectures formed upon, through what means so great a cheat and entire defeat of their purpose, was so unalterably fixed upon Tories. No certainty could be arrived at about it. The English soldier who had taken the canteen of water and bread and meat to you, Colonel.

was strictly inquired after, but was nowhere to be found. I had guarded against that; for when I got permission to do so I was in disguise, which dress was immediately after destroyed. And had my three friends now present seen me, on that occasion, going about from place to place, throughout the camp, with my fellow-soldiers trying to discover the traitor, and thereby get the reward of one hundred pounds, you would have been as much amused as I was to myself, at the credulity I was playing off upon them, as well as upon the enraged Tory faction."

As early the next morning, as the routine of that kind of bustle usual upon a breakfast-hour at a tavern would admit of, Leftridge repaired to the shop of the engraver, with whom he had left the watch and the inscription the day before. Finding it completed, as directed, he paid for it, and then returned to the hotel. When he entered their apartment, he found his three friends engaged, each reading the news of the morning, from papers which had just before been brought to the room.

"Well, gentlemen," said the Colonel, as he entered the apartment, "you all seem busily engaged; pray, tell me what news there is this morning."

"For my part," replied Withrow, "I augur the final blow struck at, and an entire overthrow of all power on the part of the British government over that of your country, consequent upon the surrender of Cornwallis—an, event as unforeseen by him as it was unexpected by his sovereign. And, so far as the war itself was concerned, it had long since become an unpopular measure among the people of England. Your august chieftain," he continued, "aided by the

no less celebrated republican, Lafayette, with Rochambeau and De Grasse, has, however, achieved the groundwork material of one of the greatest republics in the world; and, if continued to be strengthened by the united actions of the respective states, will so effectually establish your independence, as never again to make you fearful of the power of English tyranny."

"I hope," replied Leftridge, "that all, all will be as it should. And now, sir, allow me to advert again to the final accomplishment of the treaty of friendship between yourself and me. I allude to my request, that you go and reside with me in Virginia, till you have settled on other views relative to yourself. Upon this subject you deferred an answer a day or two since; and as I am now upon the eve of departure for my home, will be most happy that you will not only speak now on this subject, but that you will also determine to go with me, and make my house your future home; where my mother, my sister, and my niece, as well as myself, will endeavor to make your time agreeable and yourself happy."

"I am, Colonel," replied Withrow, "more than obliged to you for the reference you again make to your kind wish and intentions towards me. The bare mention of them is sufficient for me to know that you mean what you say; and why I should at all hesitate in the acceptance of your offer may, doubtless, seem in your estimation a strange feature of singularity in me. The truth is, sir, that I have ever entertained the greatest degree of repugnant feelings at the idea of being a dependent upon any one, however strong my claims may be upon them. And as for those you may, doubtless, think I have upon you, I again re-

peat it, that in saving your life I was only in the performance of my duty in endeavoring to 'Do unto all as I would wish all should do unto me.' You cannot, sir," he continued, "require a stronger proof of my friendship and esteem for you than that which the events of the battle of Guilford will ever forcibly imprint upon your memory, let the then humble soldier and preserver of your life be where he may.

"For the continuance and preservation of my friendship for you, I here, not only in the presence of the Great Author of our existence, but in that also of your, as well as my two equal friends, declare it on my part unchangeable. If," continued he, "this is satisfactory, our treaty is ratified; not *written*, as treaties generally are, upon parchment or paper, but indelibly stamped upon the seat of life of both of us. And here," said he, after a moment's pause, "I assent to your proposal, and I shall hold myself in readiness to accompany you on your journey home at any time set for your departure."

CHAPTER X.

It is good to be obedient, because it insures protection from the Most High! When this is the case what can harm us?

THE consent of Withrow to accompany his friend, seemed to reanimate the spirits of all, and particularly those of the Colonel himself, who, after they had dined and returned to their apartments, in a very pleasant and agreeable humor, observed,

"Had you, my dear sir, been so long in coming to a conclusion of how to act, and what course to pursue on the day I was taken prisoner, as you have been in the acceptance of my invitation to go with me home, I doubt whether I should ever have had the pleasure of soliciting you to do so. Or that of presenting you for the second time this, mark my words, talisman of some, as yet unknown as it is, future good to you or yours.

"Here," he continued, and handing it to him, "is your watch. Upon it I have had such an inscription placed as will, I hope, be congenial to the feelings of him who is so eminently worthy of it."

After he had attentively examined the inscription, Withrow replied:

"If, Colonel, I am eminently worthy of wearing your watch, the inscription upon it makes me doubly so, since it unites me with others (looking intently at Laurence and Hyne) equally praiseworthy in the part they performed in your rescue, as is he, in your estimation, to whom it is on the present occasion presented. And here," said he, "I have another striking incident by way of fulfilment of the strange fatality which, at a time long since passed, was augured of me. Doubtless," continued he, "yourself, as well as my other two friends here, are desirous of knowing more of the British soldier than I have thus far informed you of. At a period, however, more appropriate than the present one, and when perhaps I shall be in a better mood to do so than now, I may disclose events relative to my life which, at present, must remain a mystery to you and a secret with myself. As regards the delay in my conclusions upon your kind

offer, it was occasioned from a belief with me that the impetus to generous actions are classed under two general heads only. First, to be prompt and decisive in matters where life and liberty, or aid, or either of them are concerned; and secondly, to reflect well before we impose ourselves, and then as little as possible, upon the generosity of others. This, in my opinion, is the true way to make friends and the only way to continue them. When Death was at a short space from you, I took immediate, and am happy in saying, successful steps to avert the blow, and now, sir, since you are safe and happy, I have your kind wishes, while I am one of the adopted citizens of your no less happy and liberated country. In it I purpose residing, where, if I am allowed a reasonable portion of success, I may be, at least, contented, though from a force of circumstances far from being happy.

"Believe me, sir," he continued, "that I had thought the acceptance of your offer would be to render myself burdensome to you. At your repeated requests, however, I have qualified my inclinations by yielding to your desire. I shall go with my friend, whose home, I know, will be mine as long as I desire it, but how long that may be, depends solely upon an entire unknown future to determine."

Preparations for departure occupied the remainder of the day, and the next morning our four friends left Philadelphia—Laurence and Hyne for New York, and Leftridge and Withrow for Virginia.

Upon his return to the City of New York, Laurence fulfilled an engagement he had been under for some months, in that of his marriage to the younger daughter of one of his associate officers in service—

General Lincoln—and in the following year opened a house in the mercantile business, under the firm of "Laurence and Hyne,"

Profiting by the examples shown him by his friend and patron, Hyne, in a few months after, consummated the nuptial vow by his marriage with the daughter of the celebrated Colonel Trumble, otherwise called, "Trumble, the painter."

The success with which Laurence and Hyne met in their business, increased with a rapidity beyond their expectations, and the care with which it was conducted by both of them augured a handsome competency, if not that of opulence. The happiness they enjoyed in the marriage state produced an ease and comfort long unknown to them in the toils and troubles they had experienced during the services rendered in defence of their country. Frequently our new merchants would speak of their old camp-friend and commander, Leftridge, and their no less esteemed friend, Withrow.

"I should be much pleased," said Mrs. Hyne, one evening, in an assemblage of ladies and gentlemen at her own house, "to see the English gentleman of whom I have heard Major Laurence and my husband so often, and in such flatteringly high terms, speak. If his manners are as captivating as his generous spirit has been nobly developed in saving the life of Colonel Leftridge, I have no doubt but that some of our young ladies would become greatly smitten; and that not the slightest objection, on their parts, would be made at an alliance between, if I may make the distinction, British and American blood."

She had scarcely finished her remark, before a

response was heard from a group of several ladies, of, "I wish he was here now; his being an Englishman would make no difference with me, if he is an honorable and gentlemanly one in his manners and deportment."

"Ladies," replied Hyne, as he sat listening for some time at their different expressions, complimentary of his friend, "your encomiums upon Mr. Withrow, gratifying as they are to me, and would be to him if he were amongst us, are far short of those he merits. So far as my knowledge of him extends, I willingly vouch for his being, as you have just observed, a gentlemanly, honorable and high-minded man; but with regard to some of your remarks upon his susceptibility of love, I am not entirely prepared to say. One thing about it, however, I do know, and that is, that on one occasion, at the mention of the name of Miss Rayford, the neice of Colonel Leftridge, I discovered in him much appearance of embarrassment and confusion, which, I think, Major Laurence, recollects as well as myself."

"Yes," replied the Major; "and I further believe that he is already in love with the highly estimable young lady just spoken of. I have known her from the period of her childhood, and if Mr. Hyne and I are right in our opinions, I fear your chance of conquest over him, ladies, is a bad one, for he is, long before this time, in the enjoyment of a renewed acquaintance with that amiable and accomplished girl. Indeed, I presume, as the letters of Mr. Hyne and myself have remained so long unanswered, that not only Mr. Withrow, but the Colonel also, will be married, as part of the next news we hear from them.

From my earliest acquaintance with him," continued Laurence, "I cannot divest my mind of the impression that Mr. Withrow is a descendant of some highly respectable family; and mysterious as everything now appears about him, that his real character will one day appear brilliant and clear, as it now is strange and reserved."

"I do not exactly understand, Major," said a lady near him, "why you did not bring the English stranger along with you to our city, and let him have figured awhile amongst us, before sending him, an exile, to the mountains of Virginia, notwithstanding the power of attraction which the girl of the mountain may have had over his movements."

"That is true," returned Laurence; "but however much I might have desired it, my wishes were all yielded to the known anxieties of Colonel Leftridge."

The Major had scarcely finished his last remark, before a servant entered the room, bearing several letters directed to the firm of Laurence & Hyne, and one to Laurence individually. The servant was one who had been with him in his different campaigns; and as he came up to where the Major and his lady were, he attracted the attention of all present by his smiling appearance, and remark of, "Here, sir, is a letter from our Colonel; I would know his handwriting among a thousand."

It was, as the servant had said, a letter from the Colonel. Upon reading it, the countenance of Laurence became pale, and his whole appearance indicated a deep-felt sorrow.

"What is the matter? has anything serious happened?" inquired Mrs. Laurence, as, attended by Mr.

and Mrs. Hyne, she came walking to where he was reading the letter.

"Yes," said he. Then turning to Hyne, he said, "take this," handing him the letter, "and read it aloud, for it is more than I can silently do at the present time."

Hyne took the letter, and, while Laurence sat as sombre as he had just before appeared sprightly and gay, read as follows:—

"*Fotheringay, Va., May* 1, 1784.

"My Dear Sir:

"Yours, as well as the letter of Mr. Hyne have been for some months received. In them I have been favored with the information of the marriage of both of you, and my knowledge of the families to which you are united, affords me indescribable pleasure.

"No comment is necessary from me by way of expressing my wishes for your happiness; for, both of you have long known and experienced the influence of my warmest regards.

"I had thought, by this time, to have been able to announce to you my marriage also, as you well know the intimation I gave you of my intention, the night previous to the battle of Camden. It has been unintentionally as unavoidably prolonged, consequent upon the excessive and dangerous illness of my honored friend Withrow. He has been prostrated nearly three months, and in it has had not only the best medical aid which the county affords, but also that of the untiring as well as the unabated attentions of myself, united with those of my mother my sister and Julia.

"Often during the fevered derangement of his brain, he has spoken of you and Mr. Hyne, and has insisted that you were both present, but would not speak to him: at other times he speaks of me, asking the question, Is he safe? That, however, which is most astonishing to all of us is, the frequent and broken sentences made use of by him in his moments of delirium, sometimes asking for his mother, and at other periods speaking of Mr. Pitt and other celebrated men of England.

"A change must in a few hours take place either for the better or worse. Whatever it may be I shall advise you of forthwith.

"Please present me, with sentiments of high as merited regard, to Mr. and Mrs. Hyne, and for you and your lady, receive the same unchangeable sentiments of high esteem from,

"Truly yours,

"GEORGE LEFTRIDGE.

"To Major WILLIAM LAURENCE."

The letter of his Colonel, to his friend, soon put a quietus upon all further gaieties and amusements of the evening, given by Mr. and Mrs. Hyne; and the gloom so strongly visible upon the countenances of all present, produced the impression upon the minds of our merchants and their ladies, that, though a stranger to them, the news of the illness of Withrow, had created a sympathizing influence over the feelings of their guests.

"How frail, and yet how presumptive a creature is man," said Laurence to his lady, as they were returning home that evening. "At the summit of his great-

ness, how completely dependent he is upon that Power as mysterious as He is wise, whose omnipresent and beautiful greatness, ungrateful as man is, still sustains him.

"From my acquaintance with, I believe the distinguished friend of Colonel Leftridge, to be a Christian, and if so, should he, at this time, have done with the affairs of this, he has, ere now, had presented to him a position in the next world incalculably beyond every thing in this.

"The hypocrite, who strives harder to gain hell than the Christian does to obtain heaven, he despises, if possible, more than his Satanic Majesty does, the immediate angels of the Throne of Grace. I have never," he continued, "in all my experience with men, seen one so entirely tenacious, and averse to giving the least trouble to those of his fellow men as Withrow. It seems to me that he must have had a presentiment of his present illness; and that it was to take place at the residence of the Colonel, with whose frequent solicitations to accompany him, he with so much reluctance complied. Should he survive his present illness, I believe he will become married to Julia Rayford. An alliance, there, and nothing else, will ever enable us to know who he really is. But be that all as it may, he is, nevertheless, a gentleman, and one too who has seen a far better condition in life than the one he has for a long time since moved in."

For some weeks' suspense, that most disagreeable of all ingredients of the mind, occupied the imagination of both our mercantile friends, as well as those of their ladies. Day after day passed, and yet no letter was received; despair had usurped the place of hope, and

the conclusion that Withrow was no more, had become deeply impressed upon their minds.

One evening, while the family was at tea, a tap was heard at the door, when, presently after, an acquaintance, entering the dining-room, presented Laurence a letter, which, he said, "the post-master had just requested him to bring, as he was coming that way, and as the words "In haste" were written upon it."

The gentlemen withdrew after a short time, and for a moment the Major hesitated, but discovering that the wax with which the letter was sealed was *red*, and that the words "all is well," were in bold characters, stamped upon the seal, he opened it and read as follows, viz.:

"*Fotheringay, Pa., June* 16, 1784.

"My Dear Sir:

"For six weeks past I have made continual postponements in my every day expectation to write to you, but it was with a view when I did so of giving you and Mr. Hyne the more cheering news.

"The Omnipotent Sovereign of heaven and earth has been graciously pleased to spare the life of my friend. Mr. Withrow has entirely recovered his health, but is yet very weak. The mountain air, however, which he breathes in this region of country, will, it is hoped, soon restore him to his usual health of body and vigor of mind.

"I have informed him of the marriage of yourself and Mr. Hyne; he speaks often of both of you, and says that he 'hopes to have the pleasure soon of tendering in person his sincere desire for the attendants of happiness and prosperity upon his two never to be forgotten friends.'

"Present me, as entertaining respectful regards, to the *silent partners* of the firm of 'Laurence & Hyne,' and for the *active* ones, I request them to accept of the unalloyed wishes of a prosperous and happy life, from their

"True friend,

"GEORGE LEFTRIDGE."

Our merchants and their ladies were again in possession of their usual gaiety and cheerfulness. And the continual routine of success attending the firm of "Laurence & Hyne," was such as to give them ease, and to augur a future position among the opulent, but not *purse-proud* citizens of New York.

The latter are a class of beings to whom the better feelings as well as mental faculties of our two friends, and others like them, were perfect strangers; and with whom, so far as social intercourse was concerned, a distinct line of demarcation was observed. Not so, however, to those to whom wealth is a blessing; whose intellectual faculties dictate, and whose generous hearts and bountiful hands, in humble imitation of the Great Author of all good, are employed and extended to the feeding of the hungry and clothing of the poor.

Here, reader, after having been longer detained by them than I had anticipated, we will bid an adieu for the present to our city friends, and go into the mountains of Virginia, where we purpose taking a further notice of Colonel Leftridge and his now convalescent friend.

CHAPTER XI.

Sincerity is the base of all the virtues; destroy it and the whole temple of excellence becomes a mass of ruins.

THE hospitable reception of Withrow at Fotheringay, was of that order peculiarly characteristic of the Virginians, and of which particular no State in the Union affords a parallel.

His introduction to Mrs. Leftridge, her daughter and grand-daughter, was one of such cordial welcome, as at once to convince him that he then was in the presence of those who really respected and esteemed him, who spared no pains in their efforts to make his stay with them an agreeable one, and in every respect to realize the fact to him that their mansion was his own.

Every act and word of the ladies towards him, displayed a magnanimity of soul in the acknowledgment of their gratitude, that few are susceptible of. Independent of the attention paid to him by her grandmother and her mother, Miss Rayford was his constant attendant; and from the moment his illness took such a change as to augur convalescence, read to, and held conversations with him daily, upon such topics as were most conducive to his amusement and pleasure.

> "O woman! in our hours of ease,
> Uncertain, coy, and hard to please;
> And variable as the shade,
> By the light quivering aspen made.
> When pain and anguish wring the brow,
> A ministering angel thou!

The force of the poet's remarks, in his no less true than merited eulogy upon woman, was verified in the attentions paid Withrow by the ladies at Fotheringay.

There are the fewest number of men capable of appreciating the intrinsic worth of the opposite of our sex. And hence the entire wreck of anticipated happiness predicated upon false professions and abuse of confidence reposed. Man is ignoble, an ingrate, and not what he was designed for when he abuses the rights of woman.

"Ladies," said Withrow, one evening, and just before tea, to Mrs. Leftridge and her daughter, "I had not the most distant idea, at the time I first had the honor of seeing you, and at a period too when I was in the ranks of an army inimical to your country, that I should ever be a guest and inmate of your family. The events of an All-knowing and an All-wise Creator in the terminations of his will has so ordered it. And now, how to compensate you for the kind attentions bestowed upon me is a material, with me, of no small uneasiness of mind. I have been here for months an unavoidable invalid and burthen to you; and but for whose kind attentions given, would now have been in the world of spirits. My health, he continued, is so far regained as to make it necessary that I should take such steps as will, as soon as practicable, exhibit an intention on my part to relieve you of further trouble, and to seek another home, and that too among strangers, where to commence my career in this, now, land of liberty. The hospitalities shown me by you shall never be effaced from my recollection. Nor will ever my heart cease to throb for and be accompanied by a lasting remembrance of,

Madam, (looking at Mrs. Rayford as he spoke it) your most estimable of all daughters."

At that moment Miss Rayford entered his apartment, followed by a servant, and where the remarks just finished had with surprise and regret, by her mother and grandmother been listened to.

"Come, Mr. Withrow," said she, smiling, as she walked to a table where he was seated, "you are now under my control, you know that the Doctor has given you to me, and that too by your own consent; so that in future you cannot say that he or I either, have usurped your rights of liberty and free will. I might have starved you in your former helpless condition, if I had chosen to show you that I have no other wish than to be kind, attentive and affectionate to those whom I may have—even for a limited period—in my power. I have brought you something, prepared by my own hands, that is a little more palatable, and which, I think, you will relish a great deal better for your supper than Peruvian bark and drugs of the apothecary, to which you have been so long a necessitated customer."

"I am, in every sense of the word," said Withrow, smiling, and as a crimson glow mantled the pale hue of his sick-worn cheeks, "a willing subordinate; and had I the appointing power, would much rather create you my counsel for life, than to see you in a command depending so much upon apparent contingencies."

Miss Rayford was confused at his reply, and her mother discovering, said, "Julia is not an adept, Mr. Withrow, on subjects of such important diplomacy, as the one, perhaps, to which you may have reference. Wisdom and discretion are mostly looked for in the

appointment to high offices. And, doubtless, when she is aware of the true design of him who would confer a Consulate upon her for life, she will then act in concert with one, who like you, would approve of her administration—so far, at least, as duty to him, and affection for him are concerned. And here, let me add, in point of government affairs, that a reciprocal feeling of love and duty is a republic in miniature; and in the absence of either one or the other, a corrupt administration ensues, the government is shaken to its centre; and, unless judiciously repaired, ultimately falls into ruin."

"My mother, Mr. Withrow," replied Miss Rayford, "has kindly relieved me. Yourself and she know more of the matters of which you have just spoken, than I am presumed to know, but the day may yet come when I shall be the Consul elect of ——;" without finishing the sentence, and putting her right finger perpendicularly across her lips, she courteously bowed to him. and left the room.

For a few moments Withrow exhibited considerable marks of a confused imagination, but recovering himself, he said, "I shall never forget the time I first made that sign, nor the subsequent events it has given rise to."

"Nor will they in whose presence you now are, ever forget the man whose generosity has given the grand impetus to all of them," said Mrs. Leftridge. "And here, my dear sir," she continued, "suffer me to correct the error you have fallen into. A few moments ago you said that you were our debtor; not so, for we are yours, and as such, allow me to add, can never do too much for you."

Withrow was about to reply, but the ladies, bidding him good-night, left his room, and entered their own apartments.

Left alone, and to the entire free range of his reflections upon his past, present and future course, it was at a late hour before Withrow laid down, and at a still later one before sleep relieved his then vascillating mind. He was now evidently in love with Miss Rayford, and from every conclusion at which we can possibly arrive under circumstantial evidence, (as my esteemed friends of the bar would say,) I think my fair readers, at least, will agree with me in opinion that the passion was reciprocal between the parties.

Withrow's captivity was not so much on account of the external, as it was the internal qualities that adorned the qualities of Julia. The former qualifications are withal like those of the beauties of Flora, doomed to change and decay! while the latter, like Diamond, is seen shining with the same unchangeable and brilliant lustre, through and under all vicissitudes of life, and which are equally so at the throb of the last pulse.

What to do, was a matter of serious consideration with Withrow. He knew that his then circumstances in life would not justify his own consent to an application to Julia for her heart and hand. And he entertained too much magnanimity of soul to presume upon what he had done for one of her family, as a basis of his claim to the hand of Miss Rayford. But Love conquered Reason, and led Captivity captive.

Withrow resolved to make a declaration of his passion at the earliest opportunity, and to ask the

bestowal upon him of the heart and hand of his heretofore looked upon sympathizing and strictly attentive friend.

At the usual hour the next morning, his breakfast was brought to him by a servant; though unaccompanied by Miss Rayford, as was her daily custom at his respective meal hours. That unlooked for as well as unexpected change, created in him an indescribable emotion. Ignorant of the cause of it, he was immediately impressed with the belief that his familiarities on the evening before had given offence to Julia and to her esteemed relatives.

Withrow's breakfast was soon finished; for, under the suspense of mind that he then was, appetite is very seldom known to be kind.

"Miss Julia," said the servant, as he was about to leave the room, "told me to present her compliments to you, and to ask you to send her word how you feel this morning."

"Tell your Miss Julia that I thank her for her kind solicitude, and that I am not as well as I was last evening."

"Familiarity begets contempt," said Withrow, as he threw himself in an arm-chair, where he had been so often and attentively watched over by the now object of his affection. "But," he continued, "if I am at the present time the subject of contempt in the estimation of Miss Rayford, I have the consolation left me to know that I am honorably so; and hence must forego all ideas relative to her, save that of profound respect and esteem, which I hope will not be offensive."

At his dining hour, the same routine was observed.

The servants alone attended him, and the like compliments and requests delivered, and answers returned, as were at breakfast.

"Could I," said he, after the servant had gone, "condescend to that of the character and actions of a pry, I could by means of a few shillings, convert that servant to my use: but the "pry," as well as its kindred spirits, the tattler and gossip, are beings so closely connected with one another in their despicable and destructive influence, that the mere thought of being one or the other is far beneath the dignity of a lady as well as that of a gentleman. Hence, I must remain in ignorance of why I am thus treated, till it becomes, if ever, the will and pleasure of this still highly respected and amiable family to inform me."

CHAPTER XII.

Reverses of fortune are among the ills of life; and they who can bear them with firmness and resignation, erect living monuments to pre-eminence of mind.

THAT hour immediately preceding the arrival of daylight upon the horizon, is one of more darkness than any other of the night. Withrow was sombre; not so much on account of his affection for Miss Rayford as that of to him unaccounted-for cause of her absence. He loved her, it is true; but his sensitive bosom had already inflicted a penance on him for what he now thought his imprudence of the last night. Having bought trouble at wholesale from the

events occurring the evening before, and being plentifully supplied with mental torture, he thought that reading would afford him some respite; and taking from his trunk a miniature volume of Select Poems, the first upon opening of it that met his eye, and that seemed also well adapted to his now love-sick case, was an address to Hope, in the following words:—

"Ah! gentle Hope, shall I no more
Thy cheerful influence share?
Oh! must I still thy loss deplore,
And be the slave of care?
The gloom that now obscures my days,
At thy approach would fly,
And glowing fancy would display
A bright, unclouded sky.
Ah! seek again my lonely breast,
Dislodge each painful fear,
Be once again my Heavenly guest,
And stay each falling tear."

Just as he had finished the reading of the last line, a gentle tap was made at his door, and one too, which he well knew the giver of. He immediately laid down his book, though open, with the back of it up, then walking to open the door of his apartment, when the three ladies of the house accompanied by Doctor Craigne, his physician, entered the room.

Some ten or twelve days previous, the Doctor had instructed Withrow to keep his room till his return, and had given to Miss Rayford, in his presence, some instructions relative to his diet.

"I have come now," said the Doctor to Withrow, approaching him, "to release you from all further necessity of keeping your room. Moderate and uniform

exercise together with that of cheerfulness, the last of which (looking at Julia) I suppose the young lady is willing to be a tributary for your sake, is all you now require."

Miss Rayford knew that she would have to make some sort of reply to the "double entendre" just made use of by the Doctor, and happening to catch sight of it, took up the book, then casting a look at its contents, said:

"Mr. Withrow it seems has been invoking hope! I assure him that so far as I am concerned, he will continue to have, as he has had, every attention bestowed upon him from time to time, within my gift. And here, sir," addressing Withrow, "I have an apology to offer for not having made my appearance at your breakfast nor at your dinner, as has been, you know, long my custom to do. And the reason I have for that seeming neglect is, that Miss Lewis, my very intimate friend and adjoining neighbor came over and breakfasted and dined with me to-day. Is my apology a sufficient one, and is it accepted?" asked Julia.

"Certainly," replied Withrow, "for I have no right whatever, to object to any neglect you may think proper to treat me with, nor have I the slightest claim upon your attentions."

"Yes, you have," replied Julia, with a countenance expressive of gaiety and a light untroubled heart, "for you know that the Doctor told you to report me to him if any thing went wrong with you that I could have prevented during his absence. Besides my uncle, who we expect home to-day, will expect your account to corroborate the strict one required of me, of the attentions paid his friend."

After a few general remarks the ladies withdrew, and Withrow being alone with the Doctor took that opportunity to ask for his bill.

"Your bill," replied Doctor Craigne, is already settled."

"How so?" said Withrow.

"By Colonel Leftridge, sir," resumed the Doctor.

"By Colonel Leftridge!" with a look of astonishment, said Withrow.

"Yes, sir," resumed Craigne, "and here let me inform you that I am in possession of a knowledge of the causes giving rise to such a measure, and," continued he, "as you are now, so meritoriously the highly distinguished favorite of this family, I feel no hesitancy in telling you, that in myself and my sister as additional members of it, in an alliance by marriage, you will find two more, who will take and feel much pride in your further acquaintance."

"You honor me, sir," replied Withrow, "with information that I had not the most remote ideas upon, the confirmation of which, will, doubtless, and as I most devoutly hope, afford that routine of happiness so justly due to both of you."

In a few moments his former physician, and now declared friend left his room, and Withrow was again alone.

Notwithstanding the assiduous attentions he had met with from Miss Rayford, and the ease and graceful appearance, intermixed with preference accompanying them, the thought still imposed itself upon the mind of Withrow, that all proceeded only from the innate superiority of her intellect; and the dignity and grace with which its display was manifested, in listen-

ing upon him, an invalid guest in the house of her uncle, that kind of attention so signally grateful to the feelings of the sick, when emanating from the hand of the ladies.

Under these impressions he had begun to abandon the conclusion to which he had arrived, of preferring his suit.

At that period the revolution of France exhibited an extended field of action for the brave and aspiring genius of all. Napoleon, that star of military renown, who had so effectually astounded the European world, had begun his brilliant career! And the galaxy of distinguished merit which he had already assembled around him, was the centre of gravity to which many a noble soul, and gallant-hearted man, had repaired.

"I have come to America as a soldier," said Withrow. "In this happy land I had concluded to stay; and in it, I have become attached to one, who, it is now impossible for me to obtain. In the army and camp of France, I may be able to dissipate my present feelings; distinguish myself by some act, worthy the notice and favor of the Emperor, and still live as I have done for many years, in entire ignorance with regard to my existence in the knowledge of those whose pulse partakes of the same material, as does that of my own."

Toward sunset of that evening, Colonel Leftridge arrived from the City of Richmond, Virginia, where he had been for some weeks, engaged in attending to some business relative to the estate of his father. After greeting the ladies, in a manner so peculiar to him as a son, as a brother and as an uncle, he repaired to the apartment of his friend. Scarcely had he

grasped his hand, and had passed through the ordeal of congratulation, expressive of the pleasure felt at seeing him restored to health, ere he discovered the well-known signs of an intended journey.

An empty trunk was seen standing close to one side of his bed, upon which several packages were here and there deposited, neatly and closely rolled up, and ready to be put into their intended depôt for conveyance.

"What! my invaluable friend, in the name of all earthly consideration can this mean?" said Leftridge, as he looked earnestly, though kindly, in the face of Withrow. "The helter-skelter condition of your room this evening, would induce me to believe (if I did not know them better) that you were now an object of neglect, contempt, and even scorn, with the members of my family—and the packages I see distributed about on your bed, would make me believe what I have just said, to be really the case, that under the impression you were unhesitatingly about leaving the premises of your true friend. Excuse me," he continued, "I have never before been imperative with you, nor am I now so, but from the best of motives, therefore, the reasons governing you are required. The superiority of your mind, and the profound judgment and good sense, with which your former good acts towards me have been accompanied, will at once tell you that I am right, if it were for no other cause than to account to my mother and sister for that, of which as yet, they know nothing—your abruptly intended departure from Fotheringay."

"Your frankness rivets me still closer to you," replied Withrow, "and were it possible the attraction

you have over me, would on this occasion produce the reasons why I have your house and its estimable inmates. Many things incident to my life remain hidden with me, and those you require, must, for the present at least, be added to the number."

A mutual and death-like silence ensued between our two friends, and in a few moments after, Leftridge rose from his chair, bade Withrow "good night," saying, "I hope you will think better of this," and withdrew.

As yet, since the commencement of his convalescence, Withrow had not appeared in the family-circle outside the confines of his own room. Early next morning, he appeared at his toilet, preparatory to his joining them at the breakfast-table. He was in the drawing-room sometime before the family reached it, and upon their entry was very cordially met by the ladies, as well as the Colonel. A few moments intervening, breakfast was announced, and Withrow offering his arm to Miss Rayford, said, "allow me the honor," and taking a position in rear of the company, they were the last seating themselves at the table.

During the whole repast a conviviality of sentiment was expressed and interchanged, partaking of anecdote, drollery and wit; and just before the family had risen from the table, Miss Rayford, addressing Withrow, said: "I consider you yet under my command, so far as the latter part of the instructions of Doctor Craigne are concerned in point of exercise. The order intended for your observance you may think a strange one, as coming from a lady. I wish," she continued, "to try your strength, and to ascertain its present ability in ascending to-day the 'Pebble Peak,'

or in other words—that spur of the mountain, (pointing to it from the window,) at ten o'clock we will attempt it, and if you do not become too much fatigued, can gain its summit by eleven; spend two hours upon its top, and be here at three, when we will have a good appetite for dinner. You have been a soldier, and have been used to detailed duty, how do you like this in contemplation?"

"I can never be controlled by a commander prized higher than the one whose orders I have just heard, and will hold myself in readiness to attend you," replied Withrow, as they both left the dining room for their respective apartments.

CHAPTER XIII.

Happiness is within the reach of all, and its attainment is in proportion to the exertions made to obtain it.

THE "Pebble Peak," so called from the immense quantity of small, and variety of form, as well as beautifully colored stones interspersed every where over it, is a small spur of that magnificent range of mountains which divides the eastern from the western waters of Virginia. At the base of the promontory, the pine tree in all its majestic splendor is seen, towering one above the other, in almost parallel lines, until reaching the summit, a splendid grove presents itself, covering an almost entire level surface of the mountain for nearly three hundred yards in length, and about two hundred in breadth.

At the point from which it receives its offset or bench, and emanating from the main chain of mountains, rises a spring, bold in its current, its water clear as crystal, and of a coldness like that of ice itself. In the centre of the grove, and in a serpentine direction, that limpid stream finds its way to the mountain's brow, where, assuming a more rapid course, runs falling from rock to rock, until it is lost in the still more large and rapid stream below. Near the spring is a projection of rock that, in its rude state represents a kind of table about four feet square. Close to, and immediately around it, are interspersed, and at a tolerably equal distance from one another, fragments of broken rock about the height of a chair, so that persons seated upon them are at ease, and enabled to partake of, at pleasure, the refreshment off of the table. These rocks are covered with moss, the green appearance of which, at a few yards distance, has more the resemblance of art than of nature.

That delightful spot was the favorite retreat of the Leftridge family during the spring and summer months, and where they not unfrequently met, and often by accident, with those of their neighbors, who from the different pathways leading to and from the Peak, were often upon it, unknown to one another.

At the appointed hour Withrow was upon the piazza, near the entrance of the door entering into the dining-room, where he had a few hours before parted with Miss Rayford.

"I have discovered one trait in your character, Mr. Withrow, if I should never be in possession of another," said Miss Raybold, as she came walking

from the far end of the piazza to where he was, "and that is punctuality. I like it; it is a principle upon which good is predicated, and out of which is often derived the most sanguine expectations as well as confirmations of our dearest hopes."

"I am honored by the compliment you have just conferred upon me; and am happy in my acquaintance with one whose sentiments seem to agree so well with my own; and here permit me to offer, by way of confirmation of what is the first and highest wish of my soul, my arm in assisting you to the top of yonder mountain, of which you have so often spoken during my illness," replied Withrow, rather more agitated and confused than otherwise.

Julia, discovering his embarrassed situation, quickly said, "Your arm, Mr. Withrow, is, at all times when required, acceptable to me, and if, on the present occasion, your gallantry may exceed your physical ability to assist me in ascending the mountain, you are at liberty to withdraw your aid."

Thus saying, she laid her arm upon his, and at the end of the next hour were both upon the top of the Peak and slowly walking up the grove.

In their walk Withrow, amongst other subjects of conversation, adverted to his recovery of health—the care which had been taken of him—the obligations he was under to his fair companion and to her friends—and of the necessity he was under to leave Fotheringay. He said that while he had been a resident there, that a chain of circumstances had transpired making the recollection of it lasting as life itself, and one incident particularly, which had alternately afforded him the highest pleasure as well as greatest pain.

Julia, construing his remarks as relating to his late ill health and that of his long distance from his friends, to which he would sometimes advert, would occasionally, in her gay, sprightly and witty humor, interrupt him in order to dispel the tincture of melancholy which seemed now and again to accompany his expressions. But his last remark struck her attentive ear and high-toned soul with a degree of surprise to which she had heretofore been a stranger; and with a thought vivid as lightning and a countenance grave as that of a philosopher, though expressive of the purity and excellence of the best of hearts, said: "I am a poor expounder of inuendoes, Mr. Withrow, and must here tax your gallantry, heretofore uniform as it has been graceful and natural to you, for a meaning to the sentence made use of just now?"

Withrow understood what she meant, and just as he had promised a compliance, to be given before they should leave the Peak, they came in sight of the "table rock."

Upon their nearer approach they discovered several ladies and gentlemen, some seated and others walking about in the vicinity. A snow-white table cloth had been spread, and some two or three servants were busily engaged in arranging upon it a variety of cold meats and bread, with several bottles of spirits and wine, with other material of the pic-nic order.

"There," said Withrow with surprise, and when they had got within a short distance of the company, "is your mother, your uncle, and Doctor Craigne. I had not the most remote idea of meeting with them here to-day. The other ladies and gentlemen with whom they are surrounded I have not the pleasure of

knowing, and must here, in my turn, lay Miss Rayford under explanatory injunctions, as she has done her humble servant a few moments ago."

"At present," replied Julia, with a pleasing smile playing upon her lips, "mystery surrounds you, but I here give you my obligations to solve it, and that, too, after the manner of your promise to me—before leaving the scene now opening upon your view."

At the close of her remarks Julia and Withrow had just joined the assemblage, and before speaking to any one else, or even before noticing them, putting her fore-finger across her lips, cried out, "Well, Doctor, you see me here in performance of the last act of my promise to you, in that of giving to Mr. Withrow the benefit of mountain air."

"I pronounce him well, now, so far, at least, as relates to his physical organization; for he has stood the fatigue of coming to and ascending the 'Peak,' with ease to himself, and a great deal of gallantry towards me, and as to perturbation—the remedy contemplated, and which may be administered to-day, will, doubtless, soon make him entirely himself again."

Then turning to the ladies and gentlemen, before the Doctor or Withrow had time to reply, gave him an introduction to all, saying:

"Now amuse and enjoy yourself while I go and assist my mother in arranging that natural table (pointing to it) for yours and the comfort of the rest of the company."

The exuberance which met his eye, and that surrounded him, so far as sight would give an impetus to thought, was truly gratifying to the mind of Withrow, and although he was still in ignorance of why the

greater portion of the Fotheringay family were there, he determined to participate in the amusements of the day, come in whatever shape they might. To his near acquaintances he was polite and agreeable, affable and attentive, and to those of the family more like a relative than otherwise.

At twelve o'clock the whole party was seated upon Nature's substitute for chairs, surrounding the no less excellent one as a table. And in a few moments after were in the enjoyment of a dinner, not sumptuous, yet highly palatable.

The gentlemen, as is the case at all dining parties, had a privilege over that of the ladies, in the partaking of the more ardent of spirits: yet, when the goblets were filled by the juice of the grape, were greeted occasionally by their fair companions in an order of sociality highly contributary to the pleasures of the day. One hour passed in that way, the party in groups, begun to disperse, and were in a short time soon scattered upon different parts of the grove.

It was not long before Withrow and Julia followed the example. Mrs. Rayford, Doctor Craigne, Colonel Leftridge, and Miss Craigne, were the last, except Julia and Withrow, leaving the table of their rural repast. After giving some instructions to the servants, they too were soon alone in the grove, and in a different direction from that taken by the rest of the company. Near the edge of the eastern side of the "Peak," is a ledge of rocks, rising in height to that of some ten feet; on the top stood two beautiful spruce-pine trees. Their waving foliage afforded a dense shade, while the rustling of the breezes as they passed, bespoke a delightful place for reflection. Our two friends were evidently

at that time in a thoughtful mood, for with the exception of a few monosyllables, not much of any thing passed between them, until they reached the rock just spoken of. Here Julia proposed the taking of seats, which was readily agreed to by Withrow.

"I have led you to this spot," resumed she, "with a view to your promised explanation to me, of a part of our morning's talk. To solve your meaning of the remark that, 'a chain of circumstances had alternately contributed to afford me (you) the highest pleasure as well as greatest pain,' has occupied no small share of my thoughts to-day, although I have tried to be, under their influence, as was my duty, lively and gay towards all. That course was a forced one by me, and amongst the ingredients upon which a troubled fancy has been fed, was a determined intent to seize the first fit moment to draw your attention to it. Your intended departure from Fotheringay is what I have no right whatever to object to. But for you to go from us, under the least appearance of a known disquietude of mind, is a source of great unpleasantness to me as it would be to my family, were I to inform them of what has occurred between us, in the early part of this eventful day, and in your walk with the mountain girl, who is now, perhaps, near her last interview with you. Sophistry, Mr. Withrow, is no part of my nature, therefore, for the sake of the purity of my friendship for you, tell me unequivocally, on this lonely, yet lovely spot, in nature's proud array, what it is you had reference to this morning? So that, if pertaining to me, or to those whose blood runs in my veins, I, in their stead, and they will ratify my course, may make such concessions, if such be required, as will at least,

be a contributary to your future happiness. Not yet," she continued, as Withrow was about making a reply. "Hear me, until I shall have finished my remarks. A promise of development is mutual between us. Listen to me with attention, and I pledge myself for a return of the like compliment when it shall have become your time to be the speaker, and myself the listener.

"It is now two years," continued Julia, "since I first beheld you, and a little less than that time since your name was first announced to me. Your first appearance as a soldier in the mere discharge of duty, had, if any, but little incident worthy of attraction in it. But when I discovered the assiduity with which your deportment was accompanied toward my mother, grandmother, and myself, I could not but admire the high-toned sense of gallantry, united with compassionate feelings, with which I thought the English soldier, as I then termed you, was possessed. Nor was I the only one impressed with that opinion, for in it I was accompanied by the more sage and more experienced of minds—in the persons of my parents. The alacrity with which you obeyed their requests, or demands, if I may so express it, for you were then under their orders, and the suavity of manner accompanying the discharge of your respective duties, contributed greatly to prepossess me in your favor. And when I was informed by my beloved uncle, that that soldier who was the orderly at my mother's door, was the savior of his life, and that, too, with eminent peril to all concerned in his rescue, every impetus to a renewal of all that kind of respect to which I have just adverted, rushed upon my mind. Under the effu-

sion of the purest sentiments of gratitude inhabiting a woman's heart, I have once, if not oftener, to my uncle, in, though it may be thought flattering, yet sincerely entertained terms, spoken of you. And when informed that it was your intention to come to and remain some time at Fotheringay, must confess that it gave me more pleasure than I could then or even now can express. Since that intimation was given, I have known nothing with regard to him who is now before me, nor have I thought of anything, if I know myself, than that of how best to show my gratitude to you, not forgetting, in the most minute degree, your highly esteemed associates, whenever, if at all, a personal opportunity may afford me the pleasure of showing it. When you were so unfortunate as to become an invalid amongst us, my prayers to the Almighty Disposer of human events were for your recovery; and the attentions and care rendered you by me, were, to her now speaking, pleasing auxiliaries in trying to effect it. In those attentions to you, upon a sick bed, I may have been too often remiss. If so, attribute them not to a want of inclination to comfort and please you, but to some unintentional derangement of thought, or to some unavoidable occurrences, serving as preventives at the time. I have often seen you sombre, and have as often wished, if I knew how, to relieve you. Upon this subject, an instance at hand is fresh in my recollection, since it was no longer than to-day, as we were ascending the Peak, I discovered you ensconced within yourself, and apparently laboring under a multiplicity of unhappy reflections. Thinking that it might have proceeded from that variety of imaginary mishaps which you, probably, like

others, too often take for realities, and which are frequent causes of the purchase of trouble by wholesale, and that in advance, I attempted to avert it, by a strain of volatility, thanks to heaven, natural to me, or, in other words, philosophy teaches, to exercise beneficially to myself as well as to those for whom it may be intended.

"But when you adverted to events associated with Fotheringay, I thought its inmates immediately concerned, and in my own, as well as in behalf of them to whom I am obediently subject, asked at your hands, what it was you had reference to in that which you perceive has much weight upon my mind; as I have remembered and have repeated your words. My design of a disclosure of my feelings is now finished, and all remaining for me now to say is, that the comments made upon events with which it is connected, have not been intended to have any disagreeable effects upon you. One more remark, and I shall have closed: holding myself in readiness to hear you, that is, thus the lateness of the hour bespeaks adjournment from the Peak to the halls of Fotheringay, where, after having heard your reply to what has been said here, I shall explain the mystery adverted to this morning."

In a short time our two friends reached headquarters, or in other words, the "Table Rock," where they found all parties about making a retreat to their respective homes.

As they approached the party, Colonel Leftridge said, "Well, Withrow, your timely return to our temporary camp has saved you, as you remarked to Major Laurence on a former and far more intricate

occasion than the present one, the 'danger of not only being censured, but that of being court-martialled.'" Then looking adroitly at him, as well as to Julia, he continued, "your judge advocate, however, is an able one; upon whom, doubtless, you have great reliance, and by whom your innocence of charges preferred, will be ably sustained, and your acquittal strongly urged."

"You do me much honor, Colonel," replied Withrow, "you are Commander-in-chief here, and have highly favored me, in assigning for any defence against errors I may have made, so able and so highly an esteemed advocate as Miss Rayford. But my case is a more difficult one than, perhaps, you are aware of, and should I fall in my attempts in the trial now pending, I fear I shall do so to rise no more."

"Never fear that," said Miss Craigne and Miss Lewis, both at the same moment; and who had just been joking Julia upon her long audience and absence from them since dinner, "for where ladies feel and take an interest favorable to gentlemen, they are generally successful in sustaining the cause undertaken by them."

"I can bear witness to that," said Doctor Craigne, as he looked smilingly at Miss Lewis.

"Come, Doctor," she replied, "you are a knowing one, and all the girls in the neighborhood had better conclude a truce with you; for my part, I make known my intentions now."

"So do I," was heard from some dozen voices.

By this time the whole party were in a social glee, attacking one another with humorous and witty remarks, upon the events of the day; and in a few

minutes Mrs. Rayford and some three or four more matrons making a start, all were seen, in quite a gay humor, leaving the "Pebble Peak." Upon its summit had been spent a day of pleasure and social festivity, giving a new impetus to events out of which grew the material for the continuation of this tale. With it I have tried to amuse my readers thus far, and will continue my humble efforts, should they think fit to follow, and give me their attention to the end.

CHAPTER XIV.

Time furnishes the record, and circumstances the matter of human life.

It was sunset ere the Leftridge family reached their mansion, and when Withrow, with his charge, had gained the piazza upon which he had, in the morning of that day, assumed the province of a gallant, he courteously bowed to, and leaving Julia, repaired to his room, from whence, in the next hour, a servant attending, he was called to tea. As if the resources and zest for sociability had become entirely exhausted, there was but little passed at table, and in short time the adieu for the night was given, and each one retiring, were soon in their respective apartments.

At breakfast the next morning, Leftridge informed Withrow that he had some business matters to attend to, causing his absence from home for some time, and that in the interval, he desired him to preside over and conduct the family affairs at Fotheringay.

"In domestic routine," continued Leftridge, "you may not be at present much of an adept, yet in the midst of such counsel as those with whom you are now surrounded, it will give me no concern, other than that of knowing such of it as will come under your purview will be well conducted."

That kind of province was as much unlooked for by Withrow as it was unexpected by him, who immediately attempting a decline of the trust reposed, was soon overruled in his objections by the ladies.

"You do not mean leaving to-day?" said Withrow, as the family arose from the table.

"Yes, now," replied the Colonel, "for my horse is at the door. You know," continued he, "that we who have been accustomed to be ordered and to order, require but little preparation for campaign, and much less for ordinary business journeys." So saying, he affectionately impressed a kiss upon the lips of each of the ladies, gave Withrow a cordial shake of the hand, when mounting a fine high-spirited horse was soon out of sight of the mansion and its inmates.

The injunction laid upon Withrow, and the sudden departure of the Colonel, to what place and upon what business, both unknown to him, were incidents involving mystery, as well as they were beyond his comprehension; and feeling too much delicacy to make enquiry upon them from any one, or more of his now adopted charge, he entered his room, where a variety of thought intruding a retrospective of the past and present events occupied his mind.

The circumstances to which he had the day before, been an observer—the still more deep interest he felt himself mentally a participator in, with regard to Miss

Rayford's partial disclosure—and the now new sphere governing his movements, were matters of no small momont with him; and, while thus occupied in reflecting upon them, his attention was arrested by a tap at his door and entry of a servant, presenting the key of the library apartment, accompanied by the following note:—

"*Fotheringay, Aug.* 10*th*, 1784.

"It may be that Mr. Withrow will feel and experience some lonely hours during the absence of my son; to guard against that, and to afford a respite to a reality of such apprehensions, I send you the key of the Colonel's library, in which you will find books serving to arouse and interest.

'Respectfully,

'MARY LEFTRIDGE."

"Say to your Mistress that I am greatly obliged, and will avail myself of her kindness," was the only reply he could make before the seemingly hurried reclosure of his room door by the servant took place.

What means this? thought Withrow, as he laid the laconic epistle upon his table after a second reading. Its graphic and studied style augured something out of the reach of his experience upon the usual course of things happening at Fotheringay since he had become a sojourning resident of it. And amidst the reflection to which he was at the present crisis surrounded, a new and more strong incident occupied his imagination. "This key," said he, still holding it in his hand, "may answer a double purpose, in not only giving me access to books for my amusement,

but may, also, afford some clue, solving the mystery which now surrounds me."

Unconscious of the hour, Withrow's reverie was for the second time intruded upon, by a re-entry of the servant announcing the dining hour. His mood for repast was none of the best, but not forgetting his deportment as a gentleman and the necessity of being always agreeable in company, especially in that of the society of ladies; after a short consulting of his toilet, he was soon in the dining-room.

Here he could discover nothing but a continued routine of that politeness and attention with which he had heretofore met from the family. His dislike to inquisitiveness, and that of making himself busy about the affairs of others, forbade any thing like that of remark relative to the absence of the Colonel; nor did he advert to the note of Mrs. Leftridge, for upon those events he had determined to wait patiently upon time and circumstances to solve the meaning attached to them.

In his new sphere of protector of the family, Withrow was studiously attentive, and in order to answer the expectation looked for at his hands by his absent friend, he industriously applied himself to the domestic duties assigned him. Instead of keeping within his room and acting as a guest, as had been his course, his custom now was to rise early and give his personal attention to the respective business of each day. Systematic in his movements, he so divided his time as to appropriate a portion of it to reading, study and recreation; he suffered nothing like pleasure to intrude upon his business—nor business to interrupt his time for pleasure.

But few days passed at Fotheringay without the entertainment of company—it was the mansion of pleasure of the then "Far West," and the society of its immediate neighborhood was of the best order; that, united with the social nature of its residents, seemed to infer that they were more like branches of one, than of separate and distinct families. Miss Rayford was its luminary—her amiable qualities, good sense and refined manners rendered her pleasing to all, and to *know* her was to *admire* her.

At a period when her country was involved in war, and struggling for liberty, and had but little to hope for and all to fear, her education was carefully attended to in the city of Charleston. Here her mature age and beauty attracted the attention of several who proferred their claims to her heart and hand. As yet, however, their honors had been declined, and now among the mountains of Virginia, she had already much of that sort of attention to listen to and dispose of at her will.

The retiring manners and aversion to conspicuousness of which Withrow was possessed, made him a mere looker-on and silent spectator of the movements at Fotheringay; and only when urged by the ladies of the family would he appear occasionally amid the circles of gayety and amusement there. His natural gentility attracted the attention of those with whom he met, and added much to the social parties frequent at the mansion. In one of those, and a few moments after his appearance in the parlor, he discovered Miss Rayford, surrounded by several ladies and gentlemen with whom he was as yet unacquainted; and judging himself, from the incidental glances of their eyes upon

him, to be the subject of conversation, found relief by joining Mrs. Leftridge, who was seated at a short distance from him.

"You must dance to-night, Mr. Withrow," said she, "and make for yourself a more general acquaintance with the ladies of this section of the country, preparatory to another particular and more interesting occasion of this kind."

"To what have you reference, madam?" asked Withrow.

"The present," said she, "is not the time for explanation. Do as I have said you ought, to-night, and if events do not develop my reasons, I will solve them."

At this moment, another set was being made up to take the floor, and, seeing Miss Lewis disengaged, Withrow, bowing, took her hand, and led her to their place in it.

He had not spoken to Miss Rayford that evening, but being in the same set, incidental light remarks passed between her, Miss Lewis, and himself. Promiscuous in his attentions, he danced but once with Miss Rayford; and, from his general demeanor, no one could discover anything like preference. This had been talked of in the neighborhood, growing out of the events at the "Pebble Peak:" nor was this impression confined alone to the ladies and gentlemen of Miss Rayford's immediate acquaintance, for it had, like all other love matters, been transferred to a distance as a fact, even before the parties concerned were sure of it themselves.

Withrow, in accordance with previous arrangements, and associated with the matrons of Fotherin-

gay, had done the honors of the evening, and after supper, at a late hour, the spacious and thronged parlors were vacated; and each of the few who remained there for the night, retired to whatever of repose they might have after an evening of amusement and pleasure.

It was near the commencement of that season when the lengthy nights afforded inducements for pleasure, and, as was the custom of that section, the families of the neighborhood gave and returned parties to each other in successive order. Thus was sociability, harmony, and true hospitality, practiced at and in the vicinity of Fotheringay.

This state of things, however, was to be intruded upon, and the pleasures there marred by a variety of events. Being a resident in, and the intimacy existing between himself and the Leftridge family, Withrow was the constant attendant of Miss Rayford; if she rode out for recreation and pleasure, he attended her; and on all occasions of visiting, as well as that of her attending balls and parties, his services were called into requisition.

The reasons why the "English gentleman," as he was generally termed by those of his (as yet limited) acquaintance, was a resident at Fotheringay, were known to none save the Craigne family, the discretion of which, united to their usually sound judgment, made gossipping and tattling inclinations to meddle with the affairs of others, unauthorized, obnoxious to them. Why he was there, and the circumstances giving rise to his acquaintance with the Colonel and his family, had been the only particular request made by Withrow to be kept with them: and in speaking

one evening to the family, soon after his arrival at Fotheringay, upon that subject, he said: "Man's best acts are but too often misconstrued; malice, hatred, and revenge are their commentators, in the minds of many to whom they may become known. For my own part, if I am capable of good, and perform it to the happiness of others, I prefer them, and them alone to know it. Better be judged by few in this world, as, in the next, one unerring Judge presides over the motives and actions of all!" adding—

"Happiness, secure from every toil,
Is what we cannot here expect;
This world's a bother and turmoil,
And we ourselves neglect."

During the occurrences passing at and around Fotheringay, Withrow had no time to avail himself of his privileged access to the library, nor to think much of things with which he had now found himself personally concerned. The promised audience of Miss Rayford—her agreed-to explanation of some of the events passing upon the "Pebble Peak"—her protraction of that promise; and his to explain the allusion made to her there;—the appearance of mystery involved in the words of Mrs. Leftridge, on the night of the party;—the meaning of the note to him, and the singular and unaccounted-for absence of Colonel Leftridge, had begun to attract his serious attention, and were all passing in rapid review before him.

One thought quickly succeeds another when suspense portrays an almost blank conclusion upon certainty. In this humor, and not knowing how to gain relief from such a confliction of ideas, Withrow en-

tered the library a few moments after dinner, one day when there happened to be no company at the mansion, and in the absence of the lady inmates who had gone that day to spend it with the Lewis family.

CHAPTER XV.

When our intentions are pure, there is an innate silent approval within that makes us easy.

THE library apartment was a large room situated in the east end of the building, and led to by a spacious passage from the parlor to its folding-door. From the second floor of the building a winding stairway, led to a room adjoining, from which another small door opened upon a full view of the library. On entering it, the first thing that excited Withrow's attention was, that of there being a fine fire in it, and the room comfortably warm. The evidence before him produced the belief that there were more keys than one to that apartment, and upon seeing the private door he was convinced that others beside himself, were in possession of the means of access—to that treat of literature and research. The room had on its floor an elegant and richly variegated carpet: from the four large windows affording light to the apartment were gracefully suspending, curtains of a superior quality, while near the centre of the room stood a beautifully carved, large mahogany table. Upon it was lying in promiscuous order several volumes of historical, standard and poetical, with some periodical

and light works. Near the centre of the table were two cases, one containing a violin, the other a flute; both of which were of the best order. For some time Withrow attentively surveyed the scenes presented to his view in that new sphere of his privilege; and, after walking around the room alongside of the respective shelves containing the innumerable volumes, enclosed by large sliding glass doors, he approached an arm chair, the appearance of which displayed the genuine and workmanlike taste of its maker. It was massive, and partook of the same material as that of the table, and some six small chairs that were arranged in genteel order, throughout the apartment. This chair, thought he, drawing it more close to the fire, and alongside of the table, is doubtless an old relic of this meritorious family, and in its descent, none have ever been more worthy of it, than its present owners.

Thus thinking, and carelessly throwing himself into it, he opened the case of, and took the violin from it.

"It is long," said he to himself, "since I have touched an instrument of music of any kind, my own violin and flute have both been long neglected, and the present opportunity is favorable to my attempt, while it will have a tendency of relief from affairs that are now pressing but too heavily upon my mind."

Having tried both instruments, and after playing the two national airs of America, his attention was soon drawn to a pile of pieces of music-books lying on a small table a few steps distant from the private entry door.

Regardless of the passing time and the gradual decline of the sunny rays that gilded the lofty peaks of the surrounding mountains, Withrow was too intent

upon the pleasures music affords to the soul to notice anything not thought of nor at all expected. The ladies had returned, and no one knowing anything of him, except that he had not been seen since he had dined, excited some surprise.

"Is there a fire in my study-room?" inquired Miss Rayford of a servant. And being answered in the affirmative, she went to it for the purpose of answering a letter that day received from her uncle. The apartment here alluded to, was the one already mentioned as adjoining the library, and upon Julia's nearer approach to it the sound of music, in low under tones, fell upon her ear. "What means this?" thought she, as with cautious step and uncertain mind she entered her favorite room. "Surely that music proceeds from the library, and by what unknown performer it is made is truly strange, as he who usually amuses himself there is now far away. No one is now at the mansion who performs upon the instruments in that room, and this intruder, whoever he may be, has gained his access there in some improper way, and usurped a privilege my uncle would not sanction if he were now here."

Being in ignorance of the privileged access of Withrow to the library, and equally as much so of his knowledge of music—the thought that it might be him had not for a moment entered her imagination. A stranger to timidity and fear, and always collected and firm, Julia resolved upon solving the mystery, and to ascertain from what source the fine tones upon the flute, just succeeding those which she had heard a little before on the violin, emanated. At this conclusion her purpose was arrested by the commencement

of the "March in the Battle of Prague," and after listening to it and its variations for some time, she slowly and cautiously moving the lock-bolts of her door was soon in full view of Withrow, standing with his face fronting an opposite direction from her.

Her surprise was of that order partaking of pleasure and mixed with a peculiar feeling of delight. For a few moments she stood motionless and intently listening, when, just at the time he was finishing the piece, which had long been a favorite of hers, she, stepping up to where he was and placing her hand upon his shoulder, said,

"It is not often that ladies usurp the prerogative of arrest, and that of making captives; such feats are the peculiar province of your sex—but on the present occasion, know yourself my prisoner, and that lenity will rest in my bosom for one like you. Did I not know you as I do this privilege would not have been taken; excuse my volatility and intrusion upon your amusement and pleasure."

Withrow was equally as surprised as gratified at an event so unexpected to himself as to his fair companion, and upon attempting a reply to her compliment, was interrupted by Miss Rayford in the remark of,

"Come, let us go to tea, after which we will return to this apartment." Leading the way, and passing through her study room, where Withrow, noticing a piano-forte, said,

"And you, too, I presume, are a performer?"

"Yes," she replied, "I sometimes play upon that instrument, which will in a few days be removed to the parlor, where I hope another accompaniment will, for the time being at least, supply the place of my

uncle." By this time they had gained the top of the stairway, and in a few moments after were in the dining-room.

A social exchange of remarks upon the incidents just noticed were passed, and soon Miss Rayford and Withrow were again in the library, which had, by her orders, been illuminated by lights from a splendid chandelier, and made comfortable by a good fire.

"Ah!" said Julia, as they were seating themselves at the table, and seeing the volume, "I perceive you have been reading the 'Iliad;' have you not?"

"Yes," replied Withrow, "Homer is a favorite author with me."

"So far, then," replied Julia, "a congeniality of taste exists between us, and, if found to continue and increase upon that which I have but by accident discovered this evening, we may have a delightful time of it yet at Fotheringay; and the lonely hours which this mountainous region sometimes casts around us, be dispelled by (in some measure) an equal exertion on our parts to amuse and interest each other. For my own part, I love retirement; if properly used gives a true relish for occasional mirth, and after having mixed in and with gayety and frolic, such as you have been lately a participator of in this section, I enjoy much of the sweets of home in returning to this, and (pointing to her study-room) that apartment. As," she continued, "you have been reading the descriptive of Homer, you are, doubtless, prepared to receive some account complimentary of yourself from me, which I have with much pleasure learned to-day. But I am negligent, and must leave you for the present and go into my study, there to spend one half

hour in writing to my uncle, after which I will return to you."

"Do not leave me thus," said Withrow, "till you have told me what you have done me the honor to say, you have heard of me to-day."

"Duty first, and pleasure next," replied Julia, placing her forefinger across her lips; and bowing gracefully to him, walked into the adjoining room.

For the intervening time, Withrow's anxious hopes were frustrated; the moments within that half hour seemed to pass as if they were as many half hours instead of minutes, and any attempt to amuse himself was totally lost. He had for several weeks previous determined upon taking the first opportunity offering to know definitely the position he occupied before and in the mind of Miss Rayford; and to avail himself of a conversation with her that evening upon it, was now his entire thought and intention. At length the half hour was expended, and, in accordance with her promise, Julia re-entered the library, and took the chair formerly occupied by her. As she resumed it, she said:

"Now, Mr. Withrow, since my duty has been performed, I have returned to give you an audience, and to tell you, in this favorite room, what I have heard of my friend," (giving the word a peculiar emphasis as she spoke); adding, "there are few who deserve that title; and of that few, you stand first in my esteem. It is pleasant," she continued, "to hear one's name made use of when the comments arise from known sources of genteel and correct deportment, whether in yours or my sex. With the vain and unreflecting, such comments, but too often, have an over-

balanced sway: but in minds like his to whom I am now speaking, they can have no other influence than that which merit is always capable of receiving, and keeping within proper bounds. To-day I have spent, to sunset hour, with my much esteemed and intimate friend, Adelaide."

Withrow had been till that moment ignorant of the given name of Miss Lewis, and at the mention of the name "Adelaide," an expression of gloom pervaded his just before sprightly countenance. For a moment he seemed enveloped in abstract thought, and so much so as to appear forgetful that he was in the presence of Julia.

"Why so sombre?" said she; "has anything that I have said caused it?"

"Excuse the interruption given to your kind intentions; the thought that caused my gloom has now passed, and I will again be your attentive hearer," replied Withrow.

"That," continued Julia, "is well enough; but it is my wish to be better satisfied. Surely, something more than I have usually noticed, is the matter with you; some remark from me, perhaps, has touched some chord of tender remembrance. If so, and I am worthy of your confidence, tell me what it is, that I may be more guarded in future interviews with you."

Here both were silent for some moments, when Withrow replied:

"That you are more than worthy of my confidence is among that class of unerring truths which will ever mark my course toward you; and here, let it suffice for the present, that you shall, at a time not far distant, know the cause of it."

"Your promise is sufficient, and I shall now proceed," said Julia. "Miss Lewis and I were nearly all day in her own room, where much of that kind of comment usual among young ladies, and more especially between us as friends, occupied our minds. A review of the past and present were the topics of remark, and here, let me add, something of the future was dwelt upon in perspective with us. Among those whose names were mentioned, were several gentlemen who have appeared and moved before as satellites. In that review, their virtues and their foibles were duly compared; the 'Stranger at Fotheringay,' as you are termed, passed through a like ordeal; upon him many complimentary remarks have been made by ladies whom you have seen and become acquainted with here. Amidst this, however, you have your enemies, in that of mine, as well as in your own sex, before some of whom, your sincere friend, Miss Lewis, nobly defended you a few days since. Thus have you known the position you occupy in the circle of society here; of the opinions entertained of you; and all I shall now add is, that the present and the future must alone furnish the material from which your conclusions are to be derived."

At that moment the library clock announced the hour of ten, and as Julia arose from her chair to retire, Withrow said,

"I have one boon to ask, and that is, that you will grant me the pleasure of an interview in this apartment to-morrow morning?"

"At what time?" said Julia.

"That which most suits your convenience," was the reply.

"If so, at ten I shall be with you here."

Thus saying, she bowed to, and left him, when Withrow soon after withdrew to his room.

CHAPTER XVI.

Candor is the anchor of Hope, and Hope the companion of Constancy.

THERE are but two ingredients of the heart deserving the name and title of purity—first, a sincere service of, and devoted obedience to, the commands of the Most High! that, and *that* alone, prepares man for every vicissitude of life, determines a proper discharge of duty, and makes man what he was designed to be—an ornament of the Creation. The other is, his devotion to, and choice of, the friend of his bosom. In that connection it is beneath the dignity of man to appear and act otherwise than with affection, kindness and constancy, since from the opposite too often proceeds irreparable discord, followed by jealousy, distrust, hatred and revenge, with an entire subversion of all that happiness which ought to characterize the marriage estate. With these views Withrow entered the library, and on the following morning, at the time appointed, Julia, making her appearance, said:

"You see the regard I entertain for punctuality—the disposition I have to oblige my friends, and the

inclination thus manifested to hear what he has to say this morning to the 'mountain girl.'"

As she spoke, and with a pleasing smile accompanying her words, she took a chair by the table, not far from the one occupied by Withrow, who replied:

"This is not the first time that I have had a proof of your regard for punctuality. The happy morning on which we ascended the 'Pebble Peak,' convinced me of its influence. And it is now, by your permission, that I shall advert to events of that day's pleasure, to circumstances and thoughts, previous as well as since, to which it gave rise."

"You remind me," said Julia, "of a mutual promise given to one another there, and so far as I am concerned, I shall on the present occasion fulfil mine to you."

"For your recollection of it I am thankful, and when you shall have heard me, your will shall be my pleasure," replied Withrow.

Here he adverted to Julia's quotation of his remark, on the day of their visit to the "Pebble Peak." "That remark," said he, "has lost none of the weight of its intended meaning, and the reasons why it was made were the hospitable reception with which I had met here; the kind attentions paid me when I was a helpless dependent; and exalted mind of my then, as well as now, fair associate for the first time, (excuse my presumption) inspired me with the passion of love for you. Your rank and standing compared with that of his, who has heretofore been, and as he still is, but a stranger to you and to those from whom you have descended, forbid in me the encouragement of such a thought—I fled it—but the stronger my exertions

were to do so—the greater the impetus to its influence over me. Finding no relief from it—and its rapid increase from the daily interviews had with you, my only alternative was—a determined intent to leave Fotheringay, and in doing so, endeavor to remember its owners as my only true friends, and Miss Rayford as first as well as last in my affections. Sometimes, when in your company, incidental remarks from you induced the belief, that, if made known, my attachment might be reciprocated; but when your gay and animated humors passed in review, before me, I looked upon them as tributes, not due and obligatory, but conferred at will, upon those who moved around you. It was at those times, that '*I felt alternate pleasure and pain;*' the first, because—I loved—the next—because I could not obtain the one possessing in so eminent a degree, the qualities with which you are endowed.

"Here the requirements enjoined upon me on the Peak are complied with. That, however, is not all I designed making a disclosure of. A further development of who and what I am, is, in my humble opinion, not only due to your relatives, but imperatively so to you, and that in connection with a few particular incidents, coming under my notice while here, and of which I am to speak, I ask your further indulgences upon. So that, when I shall leave, perhaps for ever, this, to me, hallowed region you will confer upon him, now before you, the title at least of an honorable man, and remember him as such. Do not consider me as having a desire to privity with regard to your family; *that* is most foreign to my purpose, but so far as a partial connection with me and my actions here are concerned,

I think you will accord to me a right to know and understand them. Upon them I had never intended to speak, unless first spoken of to me, and the necessity now of urging it with regard to myself is the only apology I can offer for what (if it may be considered so) I am wrong in asking. Of this I have selected you as my judge, knowing as I do, that you possess too much magnamimity of soul to refuse my request, and too classic a mind to dissemble upon what I ask at your discretion. The delay of your promised explanation—the sudden departure of your uncle—the duties required of me—the laconic note of your grandmother, expressive of much, and *that* much involved in mystery to me—her equally mysterious remark on the night of the last party here—the supposition on my part, formed from letters I have frequently been honored in bring you from the post-office, that your affections were engaged, are what and that alone I wish to have a clear understanding of."

Here a momentary pause ensued, when, resuming his remarks, he said—

"With regard to myself, no one knows any thing of my origin, this side of the Atlantic; the Ocean, in its terrific as well as in its placid and majestic splendor, lies between me and all to whom, by consanguinity, I am held in fond remembrance. The knowledge of whether I have an existence or no, is not theirs: and the only crime of which a conscious duty to them accuses me, and of which I have been but too eminently guilty, will be presently explained. My mother was a Grenville, and cousin by blood to that champion of American liberty, the renowned Pitt. The hurricane storm of oppression, if I may so express it,

which swept over the heads of all whose sentiments were favorable to this beloved country, then the oppressed colonies of English monarchy, deprived many of their birthright, their estates and their homes. My father was amongst that number, who, in 1760, found his estates confiscated, himself ruined, and my beloved mother, 'Adelaide,' reduced to a state of dependence. I was their only child, and then in my tenth year. Too poor to make his escape to this 'Exile's Asylum,' my father soon sunk under his misfortunes, and I soon became fatherless, and my mother a widow. Misfortunes are rarely ever single-handed, for in three years after my father's fall from opulence and its acquirements, I was removed to one more grade of sorrow, in becoming an orphan. My education and raising were attended to by the gentleman whose name I have just mentioned, and for whose kindness he shall ever have my grateful thanks.

"Silently indignant at the policy of my government, and with a perfect indifference as to what might become of me, at the age of nineteen I entered the army as a private, contrary to the wishes of my friends. For *this*, I had two predominant motives—one, a hope that my existence might become of short duration—the other, that, if not killed in battle, I might become wrecked at sea, and cast upon the shore of some country more favorable to the liberty of speech and conscience, than that which gave me birth. This ever-memorable land, has afforded the latter, and that too without even the danger of trespass upon the fragments of a vessel or a wetting from the briny wave; and here you have the reasons, why, as yet I

have written to none of the but few friends I have left in England.

"You are now in possession of a knowledge of who the 'English gentleman,' as I am termed is. And after one more remark which, I hope, will not be one of surprise, I shall have accomplished the purposes intended in this interview, and then rest my fate upon your decision. Impoverished by circumstances beyond my control, I have no wealth to offer, but I have honor and a devoted heart, both are yours, to accept of or refuse, and in offering these, I ask your heart and hand, if they are not to another engaged."

During Withrow's recital, the allusions made to, and declarations of his suit, Miss Rayford's listening faculties were attentively engaged, and her eyes steadily fixed upon him. At its close, they dropped from its centre of attraction; a delicate crimson tint mantled her cheeks, and its sway there creating confusion, served to portray in nature's loveliness, one of the brightest gems of woman—conscious modesty. In the next moment, recovering herself, she said:—

"I hope you will not exact from me at the present time, a reply to any of your remarks. There are but few of them upon which I am at all at liberty to speak, and if my request is acquiesced to by you, I take the liberty now to appoint the day and hour on which we will return to this room for that purpose—and that day is the second from this—and the hour, the same we met here in to-day."

The proposal of Miss Rayford was readily complied with, and our two friends soon after entered the parlor.

"Julia and you have been quite selfish to-day," said

Mrs. Leftridge to Withrow, "in leaving us alone since morning, till this hour; but, as I am always disposed to be lenient in my opinions upon the acts and motives of youth in their choice of society, I shall do myself the pleasure of supposing both of you to have been pleasantly engaged."

"I venture to vouch for that," said Mrs. Rayford, as her mother uttered the words, "*pleasantly engaged*," "for that which affords a genuine zest to society, is the choice of topics, and the interest taken in them." The remarks of Mrs. Rayford were too allusive not to carry with them a strong supposition, in the minds of those whom they concerned, that there might have been a discovery of what they had been at that day.

CHAPTER XVII

A well-balanced mind is, to its possessor, like the pendulum to the clock, never out of its sphere.

THE next morning, at an early hour, Miss Rayford entered the drawing-room, where she found the matrons of the mansion engaged in reading some papers and letters that day received from her uncle.

"I was just thinking of sending for you, my daughter," said Mrs. Rayford, "and am glad you have come, that you may read for yourself a paragraph that concerns you."

Thus saying, she handed Julia a letter from the Colonel.

In the next moment, her attention was drawn to

the following remarks: "I was not aware of the excitement to respect and esteem which Julia, yet a school-girl in the city of Charleston, had created amongst those of my sex, till my arrival here. It seems that at some party at which she was, before our family left the city, she had attracted the notice and admiration, among others, of young Carleton, a son of one of the wealthy house of Carleton, Mercer & Co. He has gone so far as to ask my consent to address her; and as, I suppose, an excuse for the better execution of his purpose, has signified to his father a wish to travel, and of his intention to leave the city with me, which will be in a few days from now.

"In reply to his request, I said: 'The rank and position occupied by your family forbids that I should refuse your request, but I wish you to understand that its grant is not in the least a guarantee to the success of your wishes; for, although the guardian of my niece, in affairs like those of which we are speaking, she is and must be free to think and act as she pleases.'"

When Julia had read the remarks of her uncle, folded and returned the letter to her mother, she sat for some time mute, and apparently in deep thought upon the question involved by the information received. Then, recollecting herself, she said:

"This morning presents to my mind an eventful period of my life. When I entered this room, it was for the purpose of imparting to my ever-loved direct and indirect parents an obligation I am under, and to solicit their counsel upon the course I should pursue in it. Another matter, not dissimilar, is now before me, and upon both, the present time alone is mine to

speak, and to ask the matured reasoning of those from whom I am proud to have derived my existence."

Here an allusion was made to Withrow, the events that had taken place in the library, and the promise of another interview there with him.

"Of the affair," continued Julia, "of which my uncle speaks, it is one of too recent information for present reflection; at least so, till I have disposed of the one in which I must confess myself somewhat implicated."

"From what you have just said," replied Mrs. Rayford, "we may judge a decided preference with you in favor of Mr. Withrow; and, indeed, the unintentional discovery by me of your interview with him last evening, in the library, infers very much the opposite of mutability."

"Of that, excuse me, mother," returned Julia, "he would like to know, and 'tis now that I ask at the hands of those who shall ever exercise the controlling influence of parents over me, if I may take the first step in making Mr. Withrow your son-in-law, and my acknowledged liege."

"Then you are engaged?" said Mrs. Leftridge.

"Not so, grandma; but I am under a promise to become so, or not, to-morrow morning; and however much I may be inclined to the former, that inclination would soon dissolve itself into friendship, and friendship alone, if objected to by those in whose presence I now am."

"Do you disregard the opinions of your uncle in matters of this import?" said her mother.

"By no means," replied Julia, "I well know that whatever yours are, his will be in accordance."

The interview just described, resulted in the endowment upon Julia to act as the affections of her heart dictated; and after having asked for, and obtained the letter, already spoken of, from her uncle, for the purpose of a second reading, she left the drawing-room, and entered her own apartment.

Much of that disposition to meddle with, surmise and predict upon the result of the business of others, by opinions unasked for or sought after, was, as is elsewhere, too often the case, in the immediate vicinity of Fotheringay; notwithstanding which, the well-balanced minds of the truly lady-like and gentlemanly portion of the inhabitants, of the period of which I am speaking, discountenanced and thought it degrading to encourage such principles.

Miss Rayford had scarcely left the drawing-room before the bell of the front door announced the arrival of visitors. They were the mother and sister of a young gentleman who had for some time previous been a votary at the shrine of merited excellence in the preferment of his claim to the heart and hand of the mountain girl.

No sooner had the ladies of the mansion entered the parlor than the loquacious and ever posted up Madame Marwell, commenced her comments upon the absurdity (as she expressed it) of the wealthy to mix and associate with those who are not so. At the beginning of Mrs. Marwell's volley of invective, and knowing her fame for gossiping, Mrs. Rayford felt for the better sense of Miss Marwell, and had requested her to go to Julia's apartment.

"I declar," said Mrs. Marwell, "that these here fellers as has gut the use uv their tungs in makin' ther

wurds kum frum ther lips like tha was greest with swet ile, and a purty good face an form in the bargain, kreate too much mischiff with our gals. This heer way of lettin' our darters keep kumpenny with 'em, an sum we no nuthin uv, pertickelly tarments me, an makes the way fur our fortins to go inter tha hans uv them who ain't our ekwills. An I jist thot Ide kum over to-day en tawk about it to you ladis, an bring my dater Lizer to see Miss July. En you hev got sich a case in yore house; that ar Mr. Wutherow! nobody noes nuthin 'tall bout him, unly thet hees pore; an I heer he's tryin to make peeple bleeve hees a grate man! and by it trise to make yore datter fall into luv with 'em. You must 'scuze me, for I like my nabers, an luvs Miss Julia, an I wanter give her my esspereence in sich things. All ghals wanter marry. When I wuz young I wuz mitey purtecquelar, an I want my gals and Miss Julie to be so too. Now I shore there's my sun Charles, he's ur mach fur enny g'hal in the kountry, he don't do nothin, bet take pleasure, and 'll be worth a fortin by my old maden sister Miney, who wuz sich a fule as to refuse Tom Goodwell more'n thirty-six year pass lass Krissmast. Bersides, he'll git a good leven frum his father. Oh my gud naber, Misses Rayford, you kant jiss now tell the plesure it wood give us to see my son Chawles and Miss July marrid. I heve had my hart fixed on it for sich a long time. Besides it would be sich a good thin to see our famlys unighted an our riches all a remanin 'mong ourselfs. An now I hev tole you my opinin, I wish to heer yourn!"

The politeness of the ladies at the mansion was heavily burthened with patience as a virtue, as well as a tax,

at listening to Mrs. Marwell, and when their opinions were asked Mrs. Leftridge said, "Do you wish me to be sincere, and in being so will you still believe me and my family your true friends, Mrs. Marwell?"

"Why-ah-yes," was the drawling reply.

"Then let me tell you that the selfish designs shown in your remarks of this morning are too pointed to be agreeable, and your views with regard to the fitting associates for, and marriage of young ladies, are not necessary, so far, at least, as my grand-daughter is concerned. And believe me, Madam, that there's nothing more offensive to my ear and disagreeable to my feelings, than the unasked-for concern of others with the affairs of their neighbors."

The brief reply of Mrs. Leftridge had the desired effect. Madame Marwell ceased her annoying comments for that time, and soon after dinner left for her home less burthened, but with no better pay for her display of gossip than when she had come.

CHAPTER XVIII.

That which is productive of most happiness, is the choice we make of the source from which it is derived.

THE wished for morning had arrived, and at the appointed hour Withrow entered the library, where, in a few moments after he had taken his seat, he was joined by Miss Rayford.

"I have come," said she, "to comply with one of the most important engagements as yet incident to

my life; and one, too, which is to create a new era in yours, as well as in my future existence."

Here Withrow imagined his conquest gained, and added,

"Then you have consented to be mine?"

"Not so," replied Julia; and resuming her remarks said: "The first meeting with you in this apartment was purely accidental; the next and this one were at your own solicitation. Our last interview within these walls was an important one, because of the interest I have taken and felt in your reference to, and disclosure of, things in relation to yourself, of which I was till then ignorant, and other matters of me and mine, of which I was then, as I am now, conversant, but, at that time, not at liberty to speak. To be frank with you now, as you were a few evenings ago to me, is my present purpose here, and since the time is near at hand when the scenes at Fotheringay will assume another aspect to that in which they have heretofore appeared, within the present hour, is the pleasure felt in answering your several interrogatories."

Here Miss Rayford descanted in rapid succession, though in fine as impressive language upon the different matters (save one) contained in Withrow's allusions at their last interview, and in her additional remarks upon the daily expected arrival of her uncle; was also silent with regard to young Carlton.

"Thus," continued Julia, "have you become a knowing one upon the leading events giving rise to the anticipated changes in our family, and, of course, a partial one with regard to me, as in the routine of

that change, I obtain a step-father, and one, too, before he shall have taken his station as such, I am happy to say is highly worthy of my obedience and regard."

Here a few moments of silence ensued, when Withrow said: "Is there no one with whom you would be willing to divide the 'obedience and respect,' of which you have just spoken?"

"There is," replied Julia, "and that one has engaged, as he still does, much of my thoughts."

The inuendo on the part of Withrow was immediately disposed of, and making a direct allusion of this passion for Julia, he continued, "I am aware from observation alone, during my stay here, of the many offers made you by men of wealth, and, in that particular, putting an end, at once, to competition from me. Some are, I am happy to say, of intellectual worth, the hearts of nearly all of whom would never, I believe, prove treacherous or false to you. To such a one as would be most pleasing—that you could think would make you happy, and you in return make him so, you ought to become married; and that one upon whom you have engaged much of your thought ought to be the husband of Miss Rayford. In being so, he who now assumes the province of admiring you, will, when he is far, far from you, cast an occasional thought upon the scenes which have passed, and are still to pass here."

"I like the ideal drawing of the picture of him, whom, you say, 'ought to be the husband of Miss Rayford,' but I cannot like the sombre aspect of its back-ground," replied Julia. "And here, suffer me to add, that I know none who come nearer to your

description of him who ought to be my husband than the gentleman now before me. And know, Mr. Withrow, that your want of wealth does not in the least impair the strength of your competition with others for my heart and hand. You have asked for them, and here my heart is conferred upon you with the promise of my hand. And now," continued Julia, "as I have complied literally with your request thus far, and anticipate the pleasure of doing so in future in the capacity of your wife, I must ask your permission to close the conference and return to my mother where pressing concerns require my aid."

The sudden transition of the senses from the extreme of despair to the acquirement of that upon which the whole time of our dearest hopes is concentrated, is a kind of mental Elysium. Such were Withrow's feelings at the close of Miss Rayford's impressive remarks. But a moment before he had thrown off the heart's costume of love and in its stead assumed that of friendship. Under circumstances and at a time least expected he is made aware of the purest of all earthly things—woman's affection! And is at once told that he was not only the "elect," but the "chosen" one to govern and control the heart on that day consigned to his keeping.

If the intrinsic value of such gifts were more intensely thought of and prized by men, what a labyrinth of discord and misery would be checked and entirely put a stop to in the progress of human existence.

On the following day Colonel Leftridge and young Carlton arrived at the mansion, and, as is the characteristic of Virginians on the approach of strangers

among them, Carlton was introduced to and received by the family with that attention of hospitable politeness leaving no doubt upon his mind of their friendship and esteem.

CHAPTER XIX.

One of the real pleasures of life is the conviction we have of affording it to others around us.

Not many days passed after the return of the Colonel before the news of his arrival was known, and visits made him by his neighbors, congratulating the return of their friend. The ladies had also learned of another stranger being at Fotheringay, and by way of an excuse for their desire and purpose of seeing him, made daily visits to the mansion under the pretext of seeing Miss Rayford. Miss Lewis was the opposite of all that, and was among the last of Miss Rayford's female friends in receiving an introduction to young Carlton. He was a man of fine form and stature; possessed of a well cultivated mind, of polite and polished manners and address, and withal a warm and generous heart. His face wore the impression of the southern sun, and his black hair, and large, round and expressive dark eye made him the subject of converse among those who knew him.

The unexpected long absence; the multiplicity of domestic concerns now requiring his attention at home, and the fast approaching day on which he was to become the husband of Miss Craigne, were the preventives to the Colonel's spending much time with

his new guest; nor was his want of attention in that particular of much import, for Carlton had already found business enough to engage his every mental faculty. He had suffered but few days to pass after his introduction to her, before he expressed to Miss Rayford the object of his visit.

Too much the lady to receive his declarations in any other way but that of courtesy, Miss Rayford's first wish was to prepare Carlton for that which was necessarily to follow—the refusal of his suit. One day during a long interview with him, in listening to that strain of eloquent and impressive effusion of the heart and mind usual on such occasions, Carlton adverted to the positions occupied by his opponents, and among others, spoke of Withrow.

"Your capacity of discernment," replied Miss Rayford, "in matters of so much gallantry as the topics upon which you have so pleasantly entertained me, is one of the many qualities you possess attractive of my esteem; and in their development, have not so intentionally as accidentally spoken of the attentions paid me by Mr. Withrow. In doing so, you have kindly furnished me with the means of serving two important purposes; one to express my thanks for the high regard you entertain of me; the other, to say, that my heart has for some time been, as it still is, not mine to dispose of. Heretofore I have been free to think and to act as I pleased, and, like all others of my sex, disposed to receive and to listen to the attentions paid us by yours; but now, and with me, that privilege is at an end, except it be in company with, and that at the option of him to whom my heart, and promise of my hand have been given."

"Your sentiments, Miss Rayford," replied Carlton, "are alone worthy of the lady from whom they have emanated, and the honor you do me, in speaking of my discernment, will remain in the consecrated urn of memory as long as the heart which has on this day been offered to, and refused by you, continues to throb."

The day after his refusal by Miss Rayford, Carlton signified his intentions to leave Fotheringay. During his stay there, it had become an affair of settled conclusion among the inhabitants, that the marriages of Colonel Leftridge and Doctor Craigne were to come off; and that soon Mrs. Rayford was to become Mrs. Craigne—and Miss Craigne Mrs. Leftridge.

The busy Mrs. Marwell had already planned with all that prospective nicety of judgment with which she meddled with the affairs of others, the destiny of Julia. The wealthy young Carlton, had come for, and was to take her to the south; and Withrow, whom she could not forgive for being, as she supposed, in the way of her son Charles, was to go a beggar from the family of those upon whom he had so impertinently, and for so long a time, imposed himself.

"It will not do for you to leave us now," said the Colonel one evening to Carlton, while the family were seated at the tea-table, "for knowing, as you do, the events which are shortly to transpire here, it is my wish that you defer your departure till they shall have taken place; while, in the meantime, you may find among these mountains some fair one who may not be like the one for whom you have come among them, pre-engaged."

The remarks of the Colonel were accompanied by a

suavity of manner and pleasantness, of intended purpose, in no way calculated to offend, and so far to the reverse were they received by those present, that all were solicitous that Carlton should not go until the events just alluded to were consummated.

"For my part," said Julia, "although you found me beyond the possibility of an acceptance of yourself it may be in my power by the permission of one (looking at Withrow as she spoke) who must in future control my actions; to assist you in obtaining a reward worthy your journey here."

"To what have you allusion, Miss Rayford?" said Carlton.

"To that," she replied, "which would contribute to your happiness, in becoming the husband of my dear and long-known friend, Miss Lewis."

"When ladies take an interest in advancing the happiness of our sex," replied Withrow, "their acts are from the best of motives, and a less danger of ills resulting from than otherwise; and since Miss Rayford has honored me in asking my permission to assist you; so far as I am concerned, it is not only given, but my own influence is here offered to affect her design."

Carlton took the advice of Julia and others of his friends at the mansion. In a few weeks after their respective marriages took place, followed by the departure of Carlton and Withrow with their ladies for the city of New York. Here they were met by Laurence, Hyne and their ladies, in a full display of every attention. At that meeting of the long-known friend of her uncle, and of the no less valued, though until

then, unknown one, Hyne, Julia was not unmindful of the debt of gratitude due them from her.

"To your friendship, gentlemen," said she one day to Laurence and Hyne, in the presence of several, "I shall consider myself ever indebted, for the plan of safety to my uncle, and the execution of it by him I now have the honor of being the wife of."

After a continued routine of pleasure for several weeks with his old friends, Withrow and his bride accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Carlton, left for their intended residence in the south.

CHAPTER XX.

Circumstances afford the axis, and Events the action, upon which the life of man passes away.

More than twenty years had passed with Time, as he had furnished the record, since the occurrences of which I have just spoken; within that period two sons and two daughters were born to Laurence, Hyne, Leftridge, and Withrow. The ladies of the two former had each a son, and the ladies of the two latter had each a daughter. The two sons were reared and educated in the city of New York; and the two girls in the city of Charleston.

While the fathers of the sons were sparing neither pains, care, trouble, nor expense in the preparation of the minds of their children for useful and honorable stations upon the stage of action, common with others of their fellow men as competitors; that care was

being taken of the girls, by their parents, which, at a subsequent period, and one that I shall at a proper time speak of, ranked them meritoriously among that class of distinctions, invariably the reward of the virtuous and the good.

When manhood had begun its dawn upon the young gentlemen here alluded to, the acquirement of useful and polished attainments in which nature had assisted their parents in a liberal bestowal upon them, were seen, with regret, taking an opposite course from that anticipated and fondly looked for. The ideal edifice of splendor and usefulness, had been stricken by the death-like blow of inertness. The whole fabric shaken to its centre and tottering upon its basis, from the influence upon it of idleness and want of energy, was fast approaching a mass of irreparable ruin; to avert that and create a new action, in those for whom alone life becomes a pleasure, the every thought of Laurence and Hyne were put into active operation.

What debt is there in the affairs of life greater and more imperatively obligatory to discharge than that due by children to their parents! It is in the routine of affection and obedience only that it can be liquidated, and after the most constant as prompt disbursement of acceptances of that nature, the balance sheet exhibits a large amount still due.

Reader, hast thou a parent? if so, read again the paragraph just ended; it is intended for your benefit, by one who has also had a kind, affectionate, and dearly beloved father and mother, now no more! but for whose memory in affection his last pulse shall proudly beat.

The long-standing firm of Laurence & Hyne had

acquired for itself, not only an extensive fame in the mercantile department of the affairs of men, but had also brought to its conductors an amount of wealth affording ease in the decline of life.

It is said that wealth can do any thing; not so. For at the dying hour Holy Writ says to the reverse; as does also, the possession of it to the distressed parent at the painful deportment of children. In such cases, the unhappy mother would give, if at her disposal, hundreds, and fathers thousands, for the restoration to proper deportment of their too much indulged daughters and sons.

Withrow had, within the time spoken of, gone to and settled himself in the South, and Leftridge occupied the Mansion at Fotheringay. Prosperity seemed to crown the efforts of both of these gentlemen; and Leftridge, though it had long before been refused by Withrow, settled nearly half of his large and productive estate upon his beloved niece, Julia.

At the age of ten years of the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Leftridge, it was the request of Mr. and Mrs. Withrow that she should be sent to Charleston, there to be educated with their own daughter.

That request was granted, and at the respective age of eighteen, those young ladies left their school with highly accredited honors, and taking their station in the circles of society they were ever after spoken of as possessing minds adorned by every virtue.

During the occurrence of the events here spoken of, a regular correspondence, not only on the part of the gentlemen, but their ladies also, had been kept up. Their ladies had been made acquainted with the compact of intentional desire, which for years past had

been, and still was known to be in existence, between the four fathers. Yet nothing of the kind, up to that period, had been spoken of, or even alluded to before their children.

The health of Withrow and that of his lady had become much impaired, and a change of climate being determined on, with their only child, set out for the mountains of Virginia. Upon their arrival at Fotheringay, the society of her mother, grandmother (very old, yet still active in mind) and that of her uncle, seemed to have created a new action in the health of Mrs. Withrow. The reminiscences of former times and scenes among them, some of the most endearing of her life, appeared to create a new impetus to recovery in the physical strength of Julia, but it was of short duration. One day, while on her death-bed and near a window that commanded a view of the Pebble Peak, which, and the occurrences happening upon it, are already known to my readers, in low, yet impressive tones, she said: "Time passes swiftly, and pleasures in the retrospect, are but a glance of the mind that recall them. In the enjoyment of health, and that twenty-five years since, I, with others, dear to me, were upon its summit. Now, I am at its base, where, ere long, I shall breathe my last. I desire when that is the case that my remains shall be deposited upon the top of that mountain, and near the rock upon which, in years past and gone, my hearts record of love's young dream began its course. I am now prepared," continued she, "to leave this for a better world, and come death when he may, I am ready." Here she requested her relatives to surround her bed, when, in an audible voice, she pronounced the

word "*farewell!*" Then looking up with a composure of countenance expressive of confidence, soon after closed her eyes, to open them no more.

A like scene to that just described soon occurred in the death and burial at the same place, of Withrow. And a few days before his death, his daughter being at his bedside, he said: "My daughter the hour is near at hand when I must leave you; I have tried to live, as I am now dying—in fear, obedience and firm reliance upon the mercies of the Most High. And have tried to be an humble practitioner of that graphic code of faith given to man by his unerring Savior! my last request is, That you will try to live in and after the manner prescribed by Him; if so, the hour of death to you cannot fail to be a pleasant one."

CHAPTER XXI.

In nothing are we more acceptable in the sight of Deity, than when our acts portend good.

WITHROW and his lady had now been dead more than a year, and in a letter received about that time, by Leftridge, from his friend Laurence, were the following remarks: "You are doubtless well aware of the anxiety of parents relative to their children, and can, therefore, readily imagine the concern felt by me and three others here, for ours. I feel sorrow in telling you of the despair to which we have arrived, upon the subject between us, so long intended, of perpetuity.

"For it seems that everything thus far done preparatory to a worthy marriage of our son to your daughter, has become a perfect mockery upon our best efforts to inculcate business habits and the practice of them in him. Mr. and Mrs. Hyne are in a like dilemma, and of the same opinion with regard to their son. With theirs, as well as our dear boy, there seems to be no longer a hope of reclamation from inertness, and a still more dreaded fear of habitual intemperance. Parents know not what they raise their children for! and for the sake of your four friends here, please give us your opinion how to act."

Leftridge was deeply impressed with concern at the condition of the parental hope of his friends, as well as their appeal made to him for counsel; and with all that earnest reflection that ought to mark the acts of one true friend toward another, considered well the reply he should make. This done, he, with that volatility of temperament at times so remarkable in him, though naturally grave and dignified, wrote as follows, to Laurence:—

"That you know the depth of interest I feel for the prosperity and happiness of you and yours, as well as for my no less esteemed friend, Mr. Hyne, and family, is what I need not here multiply words to convince you of. It is to be regretted that the things of which you speak have become common, and two of the most intense bitterness incident to parental life. And now, the plan I have devised, with the intent to save, and which is as follows laid before you and Mr. Hyne for yours and his approval or rejection, in the attempt to reclaim and bring to some sort of

approved system of deportment those of whom you speak.

"Those who are brought up in the manners and customs of city life, know little, if anything of a frontier one. In this particular, the manners, customs, and scenes here can be more easily imposed upon the credulity of yours and the son of Mr. Hyne than if it were otherwise with them.

"The better to effect my purpose, I have instituted here, and among a few and highly worthy young gentlemen, sons of my well-known neighbors, an "Order of Bandits," and, so far as the reality of its purposes is concerned, have already searched for and found a cavern, about ten miles distant, well adapted for the use intended. A judge, and other officers of the court, with lawyers and jurymen, have been chosen and appointed from among, if for them, in my scheme, there may be any use.

"For the first time, I have imparted to my beloved daughter, and my no less beloved adopted one, my wishes, with those of yours, Mr. Hyne, and your ladies. In every particular, a like secrecy to that practiced by you two gentlemen, years ago, for my benefit, will be observed, and I hope as effectually carried out for the benefit of all concerned.

"In the part pantomimic of the affair intended, I play the part of a country tavern-keeper; and the man who is really the inn-keeper here, with his family, I purpose, for the time being, to possession and control of my house.

"When I mentioned my plot to the young ladies, and the circumstances leading to and giving rise to it, it was in presence of my whole family; and after

a little of the surprise as well as humor it excited had passed, one of them said: 'It is not your intention, father, to have us wed those gentlemen without the approval of it by our hearts; and knowing that, as we do, will on this occasion stoop in order to save, to conquer, and to love, if possible; and also consent to play any parts assigned us in this new way of making matches—especially when we have for our mentors persons of so much experience as you and those with whom you are associated in the plan before us.'

"You have now my views; and if they meet with the approval of you and Mr. Hyne, and, of course, that of both your ladies, propose to your sons an excursion to the West—getting some experienced and settled person, in whom you can place explicit confidence, and upon whom I can also rely, to accompany them. From time to time, you shall be apprized of our movements, which I hope will result in closer ties than those which at present exists between us."

The scheme proposed was readily agreed to, and a notice of that agreement made known to its projector.

Now, reader, since you have been informed of whom the keeper of the Mountain Inn was, by your permission, I will return to the respective parties left there some time ago, and continue my endeavors to amuse you in a further development of their motives and acts.

CHAPTER XXII.

In literature incident gives rise to excitement; and excitement is gratified only by research.

THE tavern spoken of in the first chapter of this work was from a fourth to a half mile distant from the Fotheringay Mansion, which last stood upon a beautiful eminence commanding a delightful and extensive view of the Roanoke river many miles distant, at it found its way through the valley.

With a view the better to effect purposes contemplated, a change of names and occupancy had been agreed upon, and Leftridge assuming that of Melvin had taken possession of the tavern, and Dierdoffe (the tavern keeper) that of Urnsden, occupied the mansion for the time being. The young ladies of the Colonel's family, Antoinette Leftridge and Leontine Withrow were to remain at the mansion, and as circumstances required were to be occasionally at the tavern.

The arrival there of the strangers, and incidents of their first night at the Mountain Inn, are already known to my readers. Hence new matter and further developments of it.

At the dawn of day our huntsmen arose from their slumbers, and when the travellers had got up, and were promenading a porch extending from one end of the building to the other, the first thing that attracted their attention was the sight of six men standing by their horses, placed in a straight line, fronting, but about ten feet distant from the front door of the tavern.

Their costumes were that of the dressed deer skin, made into a kind of coat extending to the knee, ornamented with fringe of the same material, that in like manner adorned a sort of cape which hung gracefully over their shoulders. This coat when wrapped around the body and fastened with a belt, resembled the "sack" with its conveniences and comforts, as worn at the present day. Their pantaloons, or pants, as they are now termed, were made of like material; the whole neatness of which displaying forms of muscular strength and symmetry, of which men inured to the hardships of former days were possessed. Upon their heads was worn a cap made of otter skin. In this apparel, with the shot-pouch and requisites for the chase gracefully hanging by their side, with their rifles upright upon the ground, held in one hand, and the reins of their bridles held in the other, they were patiently and respectfully waiting the arrival of others who were to join them in the hunt already spoken of. A trespass upon the gallantry of the hunters had not been long imposed, before two ladies, mounted upon fine horses, accompanied by two young gentlemen, were seen at some distance coming towards them.

Usefulness with convenience, exempt from danger, was in those days consulted by ladies in costumes used when on horseback, consequently, the skirts as now worn on such occasions, almost reaching the ground, and preventing the free use of the many pretty *understandings* of the fair, were alike unsafe or disapproved of. The lovely form of woman was never intended by the knowing Author of such excellence to be hidden, when the appearance of any part of it becomes necessary for comfort, ease and assistance.

Nor was it ever intended to be squeezed to death by the trappings of that species of folly above all most destructive to health and life.

My fair readers, doubtless, understand the allusion made in the paragraph just ended, and have, unquestionably, too much good sense to condemn me for the remarks, which with others contained in this work, are all intended for their amusement, instruction and good, in the virtues of refinement and taste, which I know the true lady is in the possession of, as well as practice of.

The intervention of a few minutes from the time they were first seen, brought into the presence of the huntsmen, two beautiful and high-spirited black steeds, bearing upon their backs, the ladies spoken of. The expert use of the check rein, and the graceful ease with which they govern their horses soon placed Antoinette Leftridge and Leontine Withrow in a line fronting that occupied by their gallant friends, while on each side of the ladies were ranged their two attendants.

The dress of those gentlemen was after the description of that of the huntsmen. In the immediate attentions required of them, that day, by their fair charge, they were for that cause exempted from carrying the rifle.

Accustomed to a mountainous region, and especially in a section of country and at a period when and where the use of carriages were less known and less thought of, any excursion undertaken and carried into effect, was invariably made upon horseback. In that particular exercise our heroines were adepts, and often with others of their sex, accompanied by gentlemen of their acquaintance, were seen, where horses could possibly

keep foot, upon the sides and tops of the widely extended and lofty peaks of the Alleghanies.

Upon the occasion before us, the ladies in question, were costumed in a riding-dress, made of a dark green cloth, fashioned after the order of the pelisse; the skirt of which extended, when dismounted, a little below the lower edge of their dress, and when on horseback gracefully resting upon the top of the instep. Its ornament was simply a double row of last gilt buttons at thick and equal distances, extending from the top of each shoulder to a point in the centre of the breast, from thence a single row extending in front to the extremity of the skirt, displaying the bust, not drawn in, but as nature designed it to be—distended. Upon their heads, was worn a sort of hat made of fine black plush velvet, not exactly, but resembling in make that used by ladies of the present day. It's decoration was an ostrich feather fastened in front, and under, an ornament attached to a band extending around it. The hat was placed more upon the right side than otherwise, of the head, and made fast by a ribbon, neatly tied under the chin; the whole displaying a graceful attitude, fine foreheads, and the tresses of jet-black hair, that so attractingly waved in the breeze as it passed.

As the ladies took their positions, a profound silence was observed, and in a few moments, drawing their lace veils to the right side of their faces, were in full view of the company, with whom they intended spending that day, amongst the wilds of Fotheringay. Their expressive eyes were concentrated upon one of the huntsmen occupying the centre of the line; and each at the same moment presenting him with sealed notes,

made signs for him to read them. That done—they unclasped their pencils, suspended to massive gold chains, supporting miniatures resting upon their bosoms, and handing them, with elegantly bound note-books, to him; his reply was soon given, when, in the next moment, the entire party was seen on its way to the adjacent part of the mountains.

CHAPTER XXIII.

An agreeable reflection upon the past, and cheerful thoughts of the present are wholesome food for the mind.

DURING the scenes described in the latter part of the last chapter, our travellers had ceased their promenade, and were also silent, though astonished, as well as delighted spectators of the (to them) mysterious occurrences in which it seemed involved.

Strangers to that of any thing like, let alone the realities of a frontier life; the costume of the huntsmen; their stern and determined deportment, yet gentlemanly and respectful manner in which they received the fair ones, who had just joined the company, were matters of remark, as well as reflection to the minds of the travellers. And the glance of the eye, and contour of the feminine forms and faces that morning displayed, all contributed to excite their curiosity, attraction, and particular regard.

At the breakfast hour no lady lent her pleasant smile nor looked the social intercourse at the taking their repast, as had been the case at supper the pre-

ceding evening. Sanco—the servant spoken of on a former occasion, was their only attendant; and when questioned by the junior part of the strangers relative to the occurrences of the morning, and an adversion to the music heard on the night before; the answer received was, that "he had been taught to speak of nothing but what his owners allowed," adding with a polite gravity of countenance, "if you wish to know, it would be better to apply to some one of your own color."

In a few moments after the reply just written, was made, the travellers rose from the table and went to their room, which they found neat and clean, and everything arranged in genteel and comfortable order. Several volumes of fine works had been laid on their table, upon which had been also placed, pens, ink and paper. "This is gratifying," said one of the young men, "for, if I can't know what I have attempted to enquire of here, I can at least amuse myself at reading."

The elder gentleman seemed to have caught an idea favorable to the part he was to perform in the affairs then transpiring; and finding his young friends seated, each one with a book in his hand, and intently engaged reading—took that opportunity to leave them, saying:—

"This is a fine morning, and I will avail myself of a walk in it." As he finished the remark, he buttoned his coat, threw his cloak around him, put on his gloves, placed his hat upon his head, and soon was out of the room.

Passing through the porch from whence he had but a few hours before, beheld for the first time our hero-

ines, and their gallant friends; the first person he met was Sanco. For a moment, he felt at a loss to know what route to pursue or how to act; but recovering, his, at that instant, confused powers of reflection, thought of the signal imparted to him at his departure from the city of New York, by the fathers of those he now had under his charge and keeping; and, venturing its use, gave it to the servant. It was well understood and very promptly returned. That done, the gentleman said:—

"Will you conduct me to your master?"

Sanco, making a respectful bow, by way of a willingness to obey his request, replied, "Please follow me," and taking a circuitous route to the mansion, the stranger was soon in the presence of him and his lady, who on the preceding night, had played the parts of tavern-keeper and landlady of the mountain inn.

The appearance and language of Mr. Standly bespoke that of the gentleman; and, not now as had been necessarily the case on the last evening, did reserve and cautious expressions govern his second interview with Leftridge and his lady. He spoke freely of the plans which had been devised, and that were then being carried into effect, with a view to the happiness of the sons of his patrons; and the extent of credit and honor, this would be so justly due to, and redound upon the fair ones who had become engaged in them, and who had thus consented to stoop in order to conquer.

In speaking of the young ladies he said:—"I was agreeably surprised, as well as much amused, at the ease and gracefulness with which they executed their

first act this morning in Pantomime: and one happy effect that it has had, where it should, is the anxiety already entertained by my young gentlemen, to know who the unfortunates, as they expressed it, are; and from whence such exquisite beauty of form and face came. In entire ignorance of the plans made for their benefit, they seem to be in ecstacies, relative to how they may become acquainted with those deaf and dumb nymphs of the mountain, so termed by them. And, continued Standly, should the ladies be equally successful in their future, as they have proven themselves to have been in their first attempts, the deaf and dumb will hear and speak when it shall become necessary, to such effect only, as will make those for whose sake they are now so happy.

After a minute description of the plan intended had been given him, together with a knowledge of the borrowed name under which Mr. and Mrs. Leftridge were to be spoken of and addressed by, and those of Ellen and Susan Dieroffe, by which Miss Leftridge and Miss Withrow were to be known, Standly withdrew from the presence of the Colonel and his lady, and winding his way from as he had done to the mansion, was soon with his young friends at the tavern. On entering their apartment, he found it vacated, and feeling chilly from the effects of his walk, seated himself by the fire. Here, and after becoming comfortably warm, he thought of how best to wile away the temporary absence of his fellow-travellers.

His attention was drawn to the table, where he discovered their pencils were left lying, each upon a sheet of paper, on both of which were discovered,

half-finished and hastily-sketched drawings of female heads, evidently intended to represent the ladies seen by them that morning—with here and there signs of the invocation of the Muses.

"This is as it should be; and if thus now, what will it arrive at in the progress of mysteries surrounding them?" thought Standly, as he carefully replaced everything as he had found it. He had scarcely done so, before the young gentlemen entered the room.

Having resumed his seat, and his head resting upon one hand, Standly seemed to be indifferent to anything in the room, and more in the reflective than talkative humor. In a few moments his attention was called to a question asked.

"What," said one of the young men, "do you think of those sketches, made of the lovely fair ones seen by accident this morning? Don't judge them too severely," continued the speaker, "for the time may come, though now in a rough and rude state, that we may be allowed the privilege of putting a better finish to them. But no!" he continued, "why do I say so, and why the indulgence of such an idea? their faces may never be seen by us again, however beautiful and equally intellectual the possessors of them may be; and if so, who can bear the thought of marrying the deaf and dumb?"

"I think you would venture it," replied Standly; "and from the effects of the first sight of those mountain girls have had upon your minds, all the defects I could possibly point out upon the sketches shown me, would not, though allowing me the pleasure of being known correct in my criticisms, prevent your continued attempts, even without another

sitting, to place them more perfect before one who I think caught at last, and whom I have heard say, 'She must be a Venus of whom I would ask the question, Will you marry me?'

"Both of you have spoken thus to me, and now it seems," continued Standly, "that, far from your native city, where wealth and beauty abound, and amid the expansive display of Nature's hills and lofty mountains, you are disposed to become tamed—and this, too, by entire strangers, of whom you know nothing; and if you did, might perhaps indignantly spurn your offers; or, in an opposite light, whose position, compared with that of your own, in birth, rank, and wealth, place them, for aught you know, out of the sphere of your further notice. We must," continued he, "leave this place shortly, and in our journey still west, may find others more worthy the admiration of both of you—as you appear inclined to love—than those now the subjects of your remarks."

The object in view with Standly was to create an excitement, and wish expressed by his young companions to continue where they were. To his allusion of a departure, they both spoke against, and expressed desires to take up their quarters there for the winter. Their gentlemanly friend seemed, at first, to disapprove of the measure, and, after an appearance of much reluctance, and apparent objection, accord their wish—agreed to do so.

Here reader, I ask, very respectfully, your permission to leave our travellers for a second time in your mental keeping, in order to discover the further operations of the huntsmen, who will represent as now

being under the direction and control of the ladies spoken of in the second paragraph of the present chapter.

CHAPTER XXIV.

What shall I say to attract your attention? Read and you will see, if I shall have done so.

It was not so much the intention of the huntsmen to employ their time that day in procuring the wild game of the mountains, as it was their wish and pleasure to be identified with two, for whom they entertained high regard, and whose objects in being with them on the present occasion, was to further a plan already devised, to get possession of the tame game that had been recently seen in their neighborhood.

The cabin of Close, another whose name has also appeared in a former part of this work, was their then place of destination; and in order to apprize his family of the intended visit of the ladies and their company. Close had left the tavern, where, it may be remembered by my readers, he had assembled with others on the night before — that morning, long ere the approach of day appeared upon the horizon.

Close was poor, and in that particular was not dissimilar to many of us, but in other respects, eminently so. He possessed a generous heart; many are strangers to such a throb. He was nobly kind to his fellow men in the hour of distress; many, vastly many, are perfectly indifferent to a knowledge and sight of such

fates. He was particularly grateful for favors bestowed; many arrogate to themselves honor in thinking of them no longer than the time occupied in their reception. He was unassuming and retiring in his manners; many are too vain to comprehend the worth of such virtues, and too ignorant to sustain themselves in the sphere where an overcharge of modest impudence, created from the idea of wealth alone—have placed them. He was an humble, though brave soldier in the army of the revolution; fought coolly and deliberately for the rights of his country, and at the time of which I am writing, was a neighbor of his former commander; he was acquainted with and knew well the fathers of the young strangers then in his neighborhood, and himself and family were the warm and zealous friends of the ladies before us.

Something more than three hours were occupied in their slow and single file order of movement, before the termination of their morning ride, which brought the gentlemen and the ladies accompanying them to the cabin door of Close. Here they were received with that undissembling kindness and hospitality, striking the imagination at no time and place with more forcible pleasure than when it is made manifest at an hour unexpected, and amid the rural pleasures of a backwoodsman's hut. His residence was a double log cabin, standing at the edge of a narrow valley, affording a few acres of level ground. Upon that spot he sowed and reaped yearly a scanty subsistence. With that and what was afforded him by the grand aid of Nature's God, in the plentiful number of bears, deer, and turkeys, with which the mountains and valleys about him abounded, he seemed contented.

Added to that was the routine of the province of his wife, and two only grown daughters, in the neatness of every thing about them, proclaiming them at once above that of sloth. And the attentions of two only sons, then young men, upon their mother, sisters, and aged father, bespoke the calm and happy bosoms of that poor, yet honest family.

A nine mile ride that morning, through valleys and over the mountains, had given to our party a good appetite, and while they were partaking of a comfortable breakfast, the subject of conversation was the Cavern, formerly spoken of, and of which our ladies and their attendants were in search.

In the course of his rambles, Close had discovered it many years ago, and remarked at the time I am speaking of, "that at the period he had done so, no idea intruded itself upon his imagination, that it would ever be put to the use it was now intended for.

With a view the better to aid his yo ng friends, Close had, with his sons explored the cave a few days before, and on the present occasion had provided several fine pine torches preparatory to their intended entry of it.

"It is about a mile distant from my cabin," said he, and addressing the ladies, remarked, "in the first apartment you must divest yourselves of your riding dresses, for you will find yourselves plenty warm without them, before you return to that room."

In a short time after he had finished his remark, the party were on their way, piloted by him and his son, and were at the end of the next mile in view of

The Cavern.

That grand and awfully sublime display of nature's rude work under the supervision of the Great Architect of heaven and earth, was at the south base of one of the neighboring spurs of the mountains, and led to through a meandering and narrow vale. If my readers will bear with, and allow me the time to do so in, I will with as little display as possible attempt a description of the cave, as upon it depends another starting point of incident; serving in its turn to make the work at which I am engaged one of interest, or to beguile, at least, a leisure moment, for those who may read it.

The edifice (if I may so express it) presents at first view, an exterior perpendicular front of rock, lying in long strata and as if piled by art, one upon the top of the other, for more than forty feet high, and some twenty-five feet wide. At the summit of that wall is a projecting or shelving rock extending outward about four feet, the appearance of which indicates a thickness of some six feet. Upon it, and emanating from a plentiful supply of rich soil, stood, in majestic splendor, two beautiful spruce pine trees of thick and tall dimensions, accompanied by several cedars, all of which conveyed the impression to the mind, that they were there stationed as talismans in His works of the "Great I Am."

At a distance in height of several hundred feet, in the rear of and from the top of the cave, are seen huge masses of rock hanging, in appearance, as it were, by the most slender fastenings, the least touch of which would set them at liberty to tumble in awful and terrific dis-

play down the steep side of the mountains, laying in one vast pile of ruins, the beautiful foliage, that in native splendor vie with each other, in the growth of the lofty pine, compact cedar and wide-spread branches of the chesnut tree.

The door, or rather entrance, leading to the interior of the cavern, is a space of about four by three feet, and is situated near the centre of the front or outer wall.

That door led into a hall or ante-chamber, about twelve feet square, the perpendicular walls of which are something like ten feet in height, of a dingy white color, and what is most remarkable about the first room, was, that its walls and earthen floor were entirely dry. To the left of the entrance, and within a few feet of the corner of that room, was an aperture extending through the wall about midway between the floor and ceiling. It was of an oblong figure about six inches in length and four inches wide. In that room, the whole party availing themselves of the advice given by Close to the ladies, left everything they could possibly do without in their subterraneous route.

Leaving the front room there is a narrow descent of about ten feet, terminating at the commencement of a passage four feet wide, the walls and height of which being much like those of the first room.

That passage led to a fissure at some distance, rather difficult than otherwise to enter, and opening into two magnificent apartments, presented a pitch of wall, a dome-like appearance of roof, of something like twenty feet in height and some eighteen feet square. Here, in the grandeur of the display of her

works, Nature seems to have been disposed to a better finish of those apartments than the exploring party had met with, thus far, in their subterranean discoveries.

From the opposite sides of the wall, and as if intended for a partition, was seen, at a distance of about six feet, a crystal transparency of about two inches in thickness, and some ten feet in height; there it seems to have been met by a similar piece of workmanship extending from one main wall to the other, exhibiting in its course a sort of fluted column, placed at nearly a proportionate distance apart, leaving below its architectural range an aperture or door leading from one to the other of the rooms, of about six feet in width and ten in height. In the centre of each room stood a crystal column over a foot in diameter at the base; with an ascent till reaching the under part of the dome, they were slightly united at the ceiling. The walls and ceiling were perfectly dry, exhibiting a beautifully white appearance, the dirt floors being here and there interspersed with rock about the height of the seat of a chair, and level upon the surface, gave to the chambers more the appearance of being inhabited by human beings than otherwise.

Upon leaving the rooms just described, the route is a still more difficult one, till reaching a third and last apartment, much smaller than either of the others, and in a direct line with those spoken of, the eye is met by the sight of a large number of crystals, partaking of various forms and hanging in transparent clusters from the ceiling. The walls of this apartment wore a more dingy than other aspect, and were here and there interspersed with the drippings of

water upon its flooring of solid rock; the crevices of which seemed to conduct these limpid and sounding intruders upon the otherwise silent and solemn grandeur of the scene, to perpetual exile, thereby keeping the floor clear of water, though constantly damp. Through that room was seen passing a beautiful, but small stream of water, clear and cold, the rippling sound of which as it moves rapidly over and amidst the rocks in its course, falls delightfully upon the ear of the listener.

To the cavern before us, and into the room of which I am speaking, judging from appearances about it, and at a time not now known and to be spoken of from personal knowledge by any one living, some unfortunates had retired for refuge and for safety. Or may have been taken during the ravages of savage warfare and murder; and where, too, others may have been dragged by savage bandits amid scenes of horror and despair. There the victims of outrage, they may have watched and listened, and listened and watched again and again, till the last pulse of raving humanity resting upon Hope's slender anchor, took its eternal flight. Or where some innocent and helpless fair one has breathed her last under insolent familiarites and inflictions of the robber and assassin, leaving her violated and mangled remains buried far beneath the summit of towering mountains.

Here, reader, suffer me to add, that the room last described was designated and talked of long after the events giving rise to this work, as the Chamber of Death.

The day had become far spent when the ladies and their command had returned to the front chamber of

the cavern. Here an hour's conversation ensued relative to the best mode of comfort, accompanied by an apparently severe treatment, to be observed and practiced toward those intended to be confined there; and the party invested of what they had divested themselves, were soon on their way in social glee, upon the events of the day, to the cabin of Close. There a like marked attention to that spoken of in the morning was shown, and after partaking of a dinner, which their ramble had created a good relish for, the ladies and their attendants, with the exception of Close and his son, set out for the mansion.

They had not proceeded far before the huntsman, spoken of as occupying, that morning, the centre of the line described, asked for, and obtained permission of the ladies to go in advance; and getting a rifle and equipments from one of the number present, was soon lost to their view.

The party had just descended into the valley that led to the mansion, when they discovered, at a few hundred yards from them, our huntsman dismounted, and standing by the side of his horse—having upon its back, and made fast by means of the bark of the hickory tree, across and in the seat of his saddle, one of the largest and finest order of bucks.

"This," said he, as the company advanced to where he was standing, with one hand resting on the body of the deer, "will soon serve two purposes; one, to cover our movements of to-day, under the pretext of a hunt in the opinions of the travellers—the other, to afford them the opportunity, very rarely, if ever before enjoyed by them, of partaking of a saddle of vension prepared among the wilds of the frontier."

It was now sun-set, and ere our party had arrived at the tavern, they were lighted on their way by the brilliant beams of the moon, here and there penetrating the thick foliage of the forest lying in the remainder of their route to the mansion. Upon arriving at the tavern the like order was observed as practiced in the morning; and when the ladies had resumed their stations, and had given the *dumb* signal of adieu, returned in like manner by their associates, they and their two attendants before spoken of, were soon lost sight of; while the others, leaving their horses in the care of servants, were soon, with their trophy of the day, in the bar-room of the tavern.

After partaking of something to drink, and becoming comfortably warmed by the fire, one that seemed to have been left in command of the company, gave an order to skin the deer, and sent a message to the landlady requesting a delay of the supper hour, with a promise of sending her some steaks. In the presence of our travellers, the noble buck was stripped of his coat, and that night the strangers partook of his flesh, at the same table, and in company with the huntsmen.

CHAPTER XXV.

The best modes of arriving at ends intended for good, are calmness of deportment and a calculating intellect; for the one engenders firmness, the other execution.

DURING the day that had just passed with them, the junior portion of our travellers spent much of it in

attempted discoveries, relative to passing events, but with no better success than their efforts at the breakfast hour with Sanco.

Shortly after the return of Standly to the tavern, from his morning's walk, and conversation held with his young companions there, Melvin made his appearance at the room of his guests.

"I should have made my appearance before you at an earlier hour than the present one, gentlemen, to know if any thing you may desire to know or have done, by which to promote your pleasure; as I was once conversant with the restlessness and instability of youth, and now with the sober and dispassionate reflections incident to an advanced life, personifications of both the periods are at this time before me," continued Melvin, "and if old Melvin, the tavern-keeper, in this remote region from your fashionable city of New York, can add to the gaiety of the one, and more solid comforts of the other, he is at your service to command in doing so. And," continued he, "in thus offering myself as an assistant in the promotion of whatever comfort, amusement and happiness falling to your respective lots, please excuse one of the characteristics of the people of my state in allowing me the pleasure of knowing your names?"

No sooner had the inquiry been made, than he was answered by one of the young gentlemen, saying,

"You are excusable, Mr. Melvin, and we cannot be otherwise than happy in making your acquaintance." Then, gracefully rising from his chair, continued: "In that gentleman," (politely waving his hand toward his senior companion,) "you behold Mr. Standly; in this one," (turning to his young friend,)

"you see Mr. Laurence, and in myself Mr. Hyne; and," continued he, "in your further acquaintance with George Leftridge Laurence and Samuel Laurence Hyne, and our estimable friend, Mr. Standly, you will, I hope, find no cause to regret our stopping at your house, and our stay until the more pleasant season of spring, at, as you term it, the 'Mountain Inn.'"

"I am honored, sir, by your preference," replied Melvin; and after a few cursory remarks upon the inclemency of the season, the best modes of enjoyment for his guests, and the general monotony of a winter spent among the mountains, as operating upon the minds of the youthful and gay, he left them to the enjoyment of pleasure, or whatever else, of the ideas produced from his remarks.

The return of the huntsmen to the tavern that evening, also added to the multiplicity of thought occupying the minds of Laurence and Hyne; and when at supper, the silence with which their attempts at conversation was met, were, in every instance, matters of no small share of regret with them. Repulsed in all, however polite, of their attempts to draw the mountaineers into conversation, and their efforts thus far to learn who the deaf and dumb ladies were, where they lived, by whom escorted that morning to the tavern, from thence to the hunt, and on their return at evening remaining in utter ignorance still—all had an opposite effect to pleasure upon the minds of our now evidently in love young gentlemen.

The condition of their minds, and the position in which his young friends were now placed, were greatly conducive to the part of the performance

assigned him, of Standly; and eminently so to the movements of Melvin, as well as to the ladies and their gallant associates. The departure of the latter, at early dawn on the following morning, for their respective homes, the monotonous and dreary appearance of the mountains, that had the preceding night been covered by the fall of a deep snow, were all considerable tributaries to inertness of mind as well as body.

That morning, while standing in company with his companions, upon the porch before mentioned, and looking upon the scenes surrounding them, Laurence, in reply to some remark of Standly, in allusion to the place occupied the previous morning by the ladies, said:

"How happily would it wile away our stay here, had Sam and myself, with each his pallet, pencil and brush in hand, another sight of the ladies, occupying this morning that spot, as they did yesterday. In such a sitting, though a stolen one, as the first has been, we should reflect such light upon the surrounding snowy landscape as would at once display a brilliancy lasting as life upon two at least of their to them unknown friends."

"Still becoming more tamed," replied Standly, in a half-sneering look, and indifferent tone of voice. "Why could not both of you have thus concentrated your whole minds upon two of your own State; where, not blinded with regard as to whom they might be in point of birth and wealth, and aided by the sage opinions of others, there could be but little, if any, danger in making a judicious choice, as is now, for aught you know, with strong probabilities, the case?"

"What are your opinions of it, Sam?" continued Standly.

"It is too cold to discuss the matter here—especially as the ladies are not present," replied George, interrupting him, "and I move," continued he, "an adjournment to our room—*there* to continue it."

"With all my heart," returned Standly, when, in the next moment, the ring of a bell announced the breakfast hour.

Upon entering the dining-room, they discovered, standing at the table—each one having hold of a chair and as if waiting their arrival—two tall and very genteelly dressed young men, engaged in an apparently earnest conversation with Melvin.

"Please be seated, gentlemen," said the latter, and in a few moments after, their plates were all served by a supply of fine venison steak, rendered still more palatable by cups of hot and well-made coffee, with some well-baked light rolls of wheaten flour, with other incidentals of a frontier fare, here and there dispersed about the table.

"This is much of a winter's morning, gentlemen," said Melvin, "and I hope your breakfast will serve the double purpose of additional bodily warmth, as well as being taken with good appetites."

"So far as I am individually concerned, sir," replied Standly, "I can assure you, that both will be the case with me."

"How is it with you, Mr. Laurence,—and with you, Mr. Hyne?" asked Melvin.

"For my part," replied Laurence, "your fare is as it has been and will doubtless continue during our stay with you—good."

"That is what I shall endeavor to have it," was the reply."

"And you, Mr. Hyne, what, if you please is your opinion?" continued Melvin,—for my rule is, to know the worst, and in knowing of it, can, in all matters of life exert a surer preparation for the best, especially with those whose friendship I wish to retain."

"Your remark is rather an evasive one, as regards me," replied Hyne, "and so far as it is so, it may not be prudent for me to inquire into, nor even, perhaps, my province to know. But so far as the partaking of a breakfast is concerned, and in view of the general hospitality extended to us, I must cordially concur with my two friends in opinion."

"Your concurrence with your friends, in opinion, touching the fare and hospitality offered is gratifying," replied Melvin, who at that instant, as if he had forgotten to do so, addressing himself to the travellers, said, "Allow me, gentlemen, to introduce to you my two young acquaintances, Mr. Dispatch and Mr. Rightquick." By that time they had all partaken of breakfast, and in a few moments, the two latter gentlemen withdrew, accompanied by Melvin, when the others following their example soon entered their own apartment.

"What could Melvin have meant?" said Hyne, as they were taking their seats, "in the last part of his remark to me? Something that I cannot comprehend, is certainly hidden under it, and, whatever it may be, I should like very much to know. And," he continued, "what adds more to my anxiety is, those two gentlemen, as he called them; I caught their eyes frequently and knowingly placed upon all three of us.

It is true that they are genteelly dressed, yet all are not gentlemen who may be in such costume; and, for my part, I think it will be no harm, at least, to watch them."

"How can you, so soon, arrive at such conclusions with regard to the young men?" said Standly. "They are to us, as we are to them, strangers; and it would be illiberal, to say the least of it, were we to do away with the advantages that a further acquaintance with them would give us; and substitute in its stead—distrust and suspicion. It is said," continued he, "and that in a volume the best of all writings, that 'Sufficient to the day is the evil thereof;" therefore, in the cases before, it would not only be ungentlemanly, but exceedingly ungenerous, were we to denounce those men, whom you have just now said, might or might not be gentlemen, before giving them an opportunity to prove, either the one or the other. And with regard to the remarks of Melvin, let them mean what they may, it will be eminently to our advantage to take no exceptions at whatever he may say, however direct or indirect his remarks and allusions. As to his kindness, we expect to be so long debtors for a hospitable and very comfortable home in the stormy depth of winter."

"You have reasoned well," replied Laurence. Then addressing himself to Hyne, said: "Come what may, Sam, we owe it as a duty to ourselves to take all patiently. This old Melvin may be a means placed within our reach, by which to find out, and see again, the originals of our attempt at art."

"Well," replied Hyne, "it is said that, 'amidst counsel there is safety,' and instead of maintaining my intended position, I will assume another more

lenient, and receive and treat, if I should ever meet with them again, those to whom we were introduced this morning with becoming civility.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Perseverance points to *preferment*, and *application* to the possession of it.

THE cold weather that had then commenced its influence over all animate, as well as inanimate nature, continued, and for several days our travellers were necessarily compelled to keep within doors.

During this time, the constant supply of wood productive of warm fires, and other conveniences desired by them, were all very strictly attended to by Melvin. Sanco, was placed at their order and control with particular instructions to obey them in attentions to their every expressed wish—save that of a direct or indirect disclosure of the plans being put into execution at the mansion. The like order as related to those plans, was also given to the servants of Fotheringay, as well as to those of and about the "Mountain Inn." To any enquiries that might be made of them by Laurence and Hyne, all were instructed to make no reply—save that of seeing the signal already mentioned, by placing the forefinger of the right hand perpendicularly across their lips. And in regard to Standly, after and not before the signal given in like manner by him to them, all were instructed to converse with, freely, and render him any service required,

with a further injunction, that their conversations with him were to be at times and places, remote as possible from, and out of reach of the hearing and even sight of Laurence and Hyne.

One day, and after having become tired in a close application at reading, in which particular they had been plentifully supplied, by the almost daily profusion of different works brought into their room by Sanco—Laurence happened to take from the table a work upon "Landscape Drawings and Painting."

"If all things," said he, "were as appropriate to our desires here as by chance, I have found this volume to be, the climax of pleasure might attain its zenith and hopes of a future, be realized, from certainties of the present. But, as it is, we must make the best we can of our condition, and lose sight of nothing out of which, a pleasure, for the time-being may be derived. This volume reminds me of our painting apparatus which you remember, Sam, our beloved mothers so earnestly recommended that we should bring along with us. What say you," continued Laurence, "to each one of us taking a landscape drawing of this romantic as beautiful winter scenery surrounding us, not forgetting the 'Mountain Inn,' and philosophic 'Phiz,' of its true—very kind, yet deep-thoughted landlord, old Melvin?"

"I have no objection to doing so," replied Hyne.

"Well, then," returned Laurence, "to-morrow morning we will begin, each one at his work."

On the following morning was seen all their drawing and painting material, necessary to a commencement, spread upon an additional table that had been ordered by them into their apartment; and whenever

the weather would admit of it, our young friends were seen occasionally in long walks taking observations; sometimes at the tops, and at others at the foot of the nearest and different spurs of the main chain of mountains. Here, by the aid of their telescopes, on scenes at a distance, they were enabled to convey to the mind correct impressions of the surrounding country, and thus, day after day, were afforded a rich display of Nature's works for the employment of their pencils, and the exercise of a talent liberally bestowed upon them by the Grand Author of such gifts, embellished by the mixture of genius, taste and application.

One evening, after a day spent in intent application at their work, and after they had retired from the supper table, the subject of conversation turned upon, in what manner most conducive to their amusement, that evening could be spent.

"We often know nothing of what real pleasure is until the means of partaking of and enjoying it have passed beyond our control. Then the mind begins collecting, as it were, all the odds and ends that had, in a truant-like manner, escaped a better and more worthy notice: when the mishaps of such neglect rush like a torrent upon every thought of the soul, and driving into an irrecoverable state things reflected upon only to be regretted."

"What new idea has now struck you?" said Standly to Laurence, as he had finished his remark.

"I was thinking," he replied, "of how pleasantly Sam and myself could pass our evenings, could it have been possible for us to have brought our musical instruments with us; and I am sure," continued he,

"that your love of music would not fail to afford you pleasure in hearing us perform."

"That is true," returned Standly; "the like thought has occurred to me, also. Here comes Sanco; let us ask him if he can get us a fiddle; it often occurs that we find a taste for music among persons of his color."

Just as Standly had finished his remarks, Sanco entered their room, bearing between his hands a large waiter, upon which was placed three bowls, each containing a quantity of shell-bark hickory-nut, already cracked. Upon the waiter was also placed three plates, a salt-cellar, nut-crackers and picks. When placing them on the table, he said, "My mistress directed me to give you her compliments, gentlemen, and to say that she had sent you something to partake of, and at which to pass away a part of the evening."

"Say to her that we are thankful and much obliged," said Standly.

"Yes, sir," was the reply. And at the time that he was leaving the room, Laurence said:

"Stay, Sanco, I have business with you."

"What is your pleasure, sir," said Sanco.

"Are there any of your color here who perform on the violin?"

"Yes, sir, master has two or three servants that saw a little on the strings between the bridge and finger-board of a fiddle."

"Do you think they would loan their fiddles for a while?"

"To who, young master?" said Sanco.

"To Mr. Hyne and me," replied Laurence.

"Oh yes, sir! and do you wish me to ask in your names for them?" said Sanco.

"Yes! and that to-night," replied Laurence

After a moment's reflection, Sanco said,

"But I think I can get you two better violins than any the servants have, and flutes besides, if you wish them."

"Ah! why you surprise me. Well, will you try to accommodate us, to-night?"

"Certainly, sir," replied Sanco; and at that moment he left their room.

"We are more fortunate, Sam, than I could have looked for," said Laurence; "for, in the first place, we have the pleasure of a treat from our landlady, and in the next, a prospect of getting musical instruments."

They had scarcely finished their nut repast, before the return of Sanco, and his appearance before them, bearing in each hand an elegant mahogany and locked case.

"Here, gentlemen," he said, "are articles that you are not used to see in such a wild country as this."

As he finished the remark, he placed the key of each in its respective lock. Upon opening the cases, they were presented with the sight of two fine-toned violins, and two equally sweet-toned flutes; the latter of which were contained in recesses made for that purpose in the boxes, and alongside of the violins. On the opposite side to where the flutes were placed, were recesses for the bows, and at each end of the cases were places for strings and rosin.

"Really, gentlemen," said Laurence, as he opened the cases, "this is a treat to us worthy of our sincere thanks, in this remote region. Those instruments are,

in appearance, what the fashionable city of our homes cannot surpass."

In a few moments, our two young friends had tuned the stringed instruments, and tried the flutes.

After they had played in concert, one on the violin and the other on the flute, and that while Sanco was yet in the room, Laurence said:

"To whom do these instruments belong, and where did you get them?"

"*I can't tell, sir, whose they are or may belong;* and all I can say is, that I got them at the *residence of Mr. Urnsden.*"

"Who is Mr. Urnsden?"

"He is our neighbor, and lives on the hill, near the little mountain, sir."

"Has he a wife and children?"

"His family consists of a wife, and *four children; two sons and two daughters, all grown.*"

"Are his daughters handsome?"

"Of that you would be better able to judge were you to see them, than to receive my opinion."

"Can *we* see them, do you think?"

"I suppose so, sir."

"How, Sanco?"

"*I don't know, sir; but before you go away, you may do so, and may know more about them to your advantage than either of you do now.*"

"You seem to speak knowingly, Sanco," continued Laurence. "What do you mean by saying that we may know more about them, to our advantage, than we do now?"

"Nothing, sir," replied Sanco, "only that I think that all young gentlemen like you ought to be fond

of the society of ladies, well-informed and rich, (if, in your fancy, you can combine the two); and as for beauty, sir," continued Sanco, "you know that riches often, and sometimes to their sorrow, make both gentlemen and ladies think each other handsome."

"Your remarks are very true," replied Laurence, "and we wish to know something more of your observations upon the nature of man. Can you tell us," continued he, "who the young ladies were, and anything more you may know about them, that were seen by us the morning after our arrival here, and who joined the young men in their deer hunt that morning?"

"I beg pardon, young Master," replied Sanco, bowing gracefully to Laurence, as he spoke, "for calling your attention to my answer to your question, put to me the morning after, in the dining room."

Here, the sound of a bell in the bar-room attracting his attention, Sanco was soon out of the presence of the gentlemen.

"The manners and actions of that servant portray another allusion, bound up in mystery to us," continued Laurence, "and if not more mistaken than I have ever yet been, that servant is thoroughly conversant with circumstances having taken place, or about to occur here, that he dare not speak of, or if he has a right to do so, thinks us not of that class with whom he would speak of them."

"You are unusually suspicious," replied Standley, "that servant is a stranger to us, as is every one in this house, and elsewhere in this country. Has there not been a marked politeness and hospitality extended to us by all we have yet known here? Dare we say,

in view of truth, that that servant who has just left us, is not, meritoriously, ranked among the number from whom we have received attentions? And," continued he, "think for a moment with how much pleasure the, with you, suspected Sanco, seemed to enter into your desires of amusement, and with what kindness of heart he executed the successful efforts, with him, of procuring the fine instruments that you and Sam now hold in your hands."

"Hemmed in again, George," said Hyne, "and that is not all, for you had nearly violated the treaty of alliance between you and your suspicions, when, a few days ago, and on a similar occasion to the present one, and calling my attention to your remark, you said, 'Come what may, Sam, we owe it as a duty to ourselves to take all patiently.' Let us continue to do so," added Hyne, "and depend upon contingencies alone, to make plain in the future, what now appears a mystery, in the movements of the inhabitants of these mountains."

"I am not convinced of error when I submit to opinions in opposition to my own judgment," replied Laurence. "Yet in furtherance of the respect in which I have ever held the sage counsel of Mr. Standly, and especially on the present occasion, it is wise at least for me to do so; and to yield *one*, to where *two* opinions are opposed."

"You are complimentary, George, and in it act in strict accordance with your good sense, which will, one day, richly pay you for the very proper use of it now."

In a few moments the perturbations of Laurence became calm; and the remainder of that night, till

bed-time, was spent in a musical way by the young gentlemen, alternately in concert upon the violin, and then upon the flute.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Disquietude borrows from the capital of anxiety, and Doubt endorses the check.

THE rambling exercises of our, at present, stationary, travellers, though for the purpose of completion of their landscape views, were beginning now, not to be entirely confined to that of inanimate objects, but also to those of personal ones.

The occurrences of the past evening had commenced calling into operation a mental exertion in the minds of Laurence and Hyne, to which they had, heretofore, been strangers. The conciliatory position occupied by Standly, as related to them, his never-failing and constantly practised attempts at argument, carrying out his purposes of reconciliation even in things where resentment might become a necessary as virtuous resort, were incidents assuming an impetus to rapidity and succession of thought in the minds of our young aspirants.

Amidst trains of reflection upon such topics, however, the well-balanced minds of the young gentlemen in question, possessed too strong a preponderance to admit with them for a moment the slightest indulgence of disrespect. Hence their interviews, as well as conversations with Standly upon all subjects, were accom-

panied by manifested dispositions of profound respect and submissive obedience; and to which they were prompted by an inviolable injunction laid upon them by their mothers, and ratified by their fathers.

Their thoughts upon the subjects of which I have just spoken, did not find with Laurence and Hyne a resting place, though as far as Standly was concerned in them, they had for the time being at least, arrived at a quietus. Melvin, it is true, was kind, polite and marked in his attentions to and upon them; yet, there seemed to be an appearance of design about him, and accompanying his actions that they could not see into. Then, there was their servant Sanco, who, as they had been told by old Melvin, would be always at their service, in whatever and all uses they might think proper to place him. In Sanco, they had seen a ready willingness to obedience, but in the execution of their orders by him, was displayed considerable savoring to precaution, reserve, cunning, and deep-laid scheming.

The day following that of the evening in which they had obtained the loan, from an unknown hand, of the instruments spoken of, the young gentlemen had risen at an early hour, and immediately after breakfast bid an adieu for the day to the mountain inn, on their accustomed walk for landscape purposes. Sanco had told them but little of Urnsden, and much less of that portion of his family and particulars of it, upon which Laurence had wished him to be communicative on the night previous, and in that state of affairs with them, Laurence and Hyne had determined to find out on that day, everything in their reach which might lead to a discovery with them of a means of acquaintance

with Dierdoffe and the family; and, as far as possible, to ascertain who the deaf and dumb ladies were, that they, as yet, had seen but twice, and that before the tavern door. In furtherance of their views, they had also determined to know definitely at what place the ladies spoken of, and who had already given them so much concern, resided amid the mountains with which they were then surrounded.

While in an opposite course to any yet taken by them, and upon the top of the "Little Mountain," spoken of by Sanco. Laurence and Hyne, by the aid of their telescopes, had a full view of the, as is well known by my readers, temporary residence of Urnsden. The family of that man, according to the account of it, received from Sanco, consisted of a wife and four children, but at the time that account was being given and under the circumstances attending it, the servant seems to have been too cunning and too well versed in the performance of a co-operative part with Melvin, in other words, his master, to say that the children spoken of, were the daughters and sons of Urnsden and his wife.

My readers will remember the assumed name of the ladies of the hunting party, which will account for their appearing, for the time being, as the supposed daughters of Urnsden, and his wife "Abitha." Here also, the secretaries formerly mentioned are their supposed sons, and the residence of all at the Fotheringay mansion, served to impose the opinion upon the minds of Laurence and Hyne, that the family there, was one of consanguinity, and not, as will hereafter be shown, composed of different relationships united there as elsewhere, only to effect purposes in the execution of

a plan resulting in the happiness and comfort of our young travellers from the city of New York, and the deaf and dumb nymphs of the western mountains of Virginia.

The wind blew keen, accompanied by shrill sounds, as it passed through the lofty pines, while they stood with their feet covered with snow upon the top of the mountain, viewing the house and its environs, of their now sought for new acquaintances; and after some talked of, and agreed upon movements of themselves, our young gentlemen began a meandering descent to the foot of the mountains, from whence a level expanse leading to the mansion presented itself to their view.

They had not proceeded far upon a narrow pathway, as, in their progress it led through a forest of cedar and pine growth before, at some distance from them, they discovered the view of their pathway obscured by the appearance of a man stepping into it, from which position he seemed to look upon them with an intent of inquisitiveness on their near approach, that bordered upon fixed suspicion and distrust. Dressed in the attire of a frontiersman, decorated by a spotted fawn skin shot-pouch, powder horn and butcher knife, suspended from a broad strap of black leather crossing the right shoulder, with an elegantly mounted rifle resting upon it; the man maintained his position, till our travellers came within speaking distance of him. Upon their advance, and in an under-tone Laurence said: "this man in his dress resembles others we have seen, and in his costume reminds me of that worn by the huntsmen, and it may be, Sam that he is one of that number that appeared

the other day to us, in the double capacity of gallants, as well as a kind of body-guard to nature's loveliness, in the shape and attire of woman—that doubtless dwell upon some spot among these wilds."

Hyne had scarcely endorsed the opinion of his friend ere both occupied, in a standing posture, a spot but a few steps distant from the man spoken of.

"Hunting, stranger?" said Laurence.

"Have been!" replied the man, as indifferently he cast his eyes upon them.

"Have you killed anything?" resumed Laurence.

"Yes," was the equally indifferent reply.

"What?" returned Laurence.

"One of the family of my growling neighbor Bruin."

"Oh, a bear you mean."

"Yes, what else should I mean," was the reply.

"Where is it? we don't see it," was the return.

"I know you don't, for it is too far off," replied the man. "I am going home for a horse," he continued, "to bring it, and if you like to do so, and will go to my house with me, you can see it there when it comes."

"You are kind, and we accept your invitation," replied Laurence.

"It is nothing to me, whether you think me kind or not," returned the stranger. "There are few to whom I ever extend *kindness, because its general reward is base ingratitude.* When I say a thing, I mean it," continued the stranger; then pointing to the path that lay partly snow broken before them, and bringing his gun to a trailed arm position, said as he stepped forward, "follow me!"

The sudden transition from an impression of placidity and benevolence to that of the sternly indifferent and double-intended last reply of the stranger, excited a degree of surprise in the minds of the two friends, bordering upon a decline to obey his injunction of "follow me!" But making a virtue of the result of accident, they were soon on an unknown way in company with the stranger, whose occasional monosyllable answers to questions put, still added to their uncertainty of whether the acceptation of his offer would not, or would afford any facilities to their efforts at discovery. They had not gone far before, instead of a dense forest, they were now presented with an extensive view on both sides, and in front, of tastely inclosed grounds, divided into fields and meadows, between their, then, positions and the mountains on the opposite side of the river.

Proceeding onwards, in a short time afterwards a gate was opened at the commencement of a beautifully serpentine gravelled causeway, off of which the snow had that day been scraped. That walk led to a magnificent and spacious building, which, if my readers may recollect, was the one spoken of in other parts of this work as the Fotheringay Mansion. From the eminence it occupied was afforded a splendid view of lofty mountains and extensive bottom lands, as they lay alongside of the Roanoke river, as it moved sometimes slow, and at others rapidly on, washing the foot of each bluff that had, here and there, and intruder like, extended their limits to the water's edge.

Upon arriving at the house, the stranger and our two friends were, for a few moments, engaged getting the frozen flakes of snow off of their boots. To that

particularity their attentions were drawn by the stranger, who, upon stopping at the entrance of the piazza leading to the hall door, drew from their scabbards, placed in different positions upon the broad strap of his shot-pouch, three knives, presenting two of them and keeping one himself. This species of civility on the part of the stranger was unaccompanied by remark; but on noticing the use to which his own knife was put, they used theirs as he did. When the knives were returned to him, he placed them in their respective places from whence they came, and raising the knocker of the door, announced his desire of entrance.

In the next moment after our two friends were admitted into the hall, and from thence conducted by the stranger, they were soon in the interior of a splendidly furnished double-roomed parlor. They had been there and seated by a comfortable fire but a few moments, before the re-entry of the servant, who had answered the door call of the stranger. He held between his hands a salver upon which was borne a pitcher, composed of one kind of the precious metals, three goblets of like material, one decanter of cogniac brandy and another of Jamaica spirits.

"Come," said the stranger, approaching the table upon which the liquors had been set, and addressing our young friends, "if you have tastes like that of mine, you can take a drink of brandy, or rum and water, after coming out of the cold. Help yourselves," continued he.

As soon as they had prepared their drinks, they were followed in example by the stranger, who, by way of a toast to his guests, said, "Success to the fortunate,

and may Fate never deal harshly with the virtuously successful."

After they had drank it, no time was allowed for comment on the part of our friends, and while the stranger was stepping to the parlor door, he continued, "I must leave you and go for my bear." Then passing out of the room, in the next moment the hall door announced his departure by the noise at its close, and the stranger was now out of the company of them, whom he had now left in rather an unenviable as awkward position.

"We have been cold, but in it, fortunate to-day—are now warm and comfortable—have had some perplexity, and are yet more in amaze than ever, George," said Hyne, as they both sat by the fire in rather a sombre mood. "The animal by whom we have just been left in this apartment is a perfect medley, possessing qualities deserving of a better chest for safe keeping, as well as a heart dictating the exercise of them. Who he is? *what* he is? and by what right he has brought us to and left us in this parlor, (the equal of which we have not seen since we left the city of New York,) involves equally as much, if not more mystery than any previous occurrence with us since our arrival at the celebrated 'Inn of old Melvin.' That singular genius," continued he, "is a complex tissue of friendship, intermixed with a depth of discernment and well calculated cunning that has baffled alike our attempts to read as to comprehend him. At his house, however, we have a temporary home, second to few, if any of its class, and where we pay our way. But in this house, the residence from appearance of a gentleman, we may for aught we know, be

already looked upon as insolent intruders, and at any moment of our stay here become more and more liable to be kicked out of doors."

"What say you to our immediate departure for the inn?"

Hyne had just finished his inquiry, when, from one of the middle doors of the parlor entered a lady. She was neat in her person, exhibiting an appearance in age of some forty-five or fifty years, and combining a good natural with peculiar traits of a correctly discriminative mind.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

What gives pleasure in the pursuit is, the hopes entertained in thoughts upon actual possession.

At the appearance before our young friends of the lady spoken of in the last chapter, a degree of pleasantry accompanied her expression, while friendship and ingeniousness seemed to govern her deportment toward the gentlemen before her.

In the course of attempts to entertain them, the conversation, by her, turned upon the that day's adventure of her guests—of their accidental meeting with a stranger—of his having brought them to (as they supposed) his house, and the abruptness with which he had just before left them.

"That man," continued she, "is my husband, and a like attention to that that you have met with in his modes of civility, is after the manner in which he

treats all, whether friends and intimate acquaintances, or entire strangers. He is a man," continued the lady, "who does not meddle with the business of others, and but seldom extends his singular and rude methods of showing friendship, unless entertaining a certainty, within his own mind, that his attempts at it would result in a benefit for those concerned. With you, gentlemen, I feel happy in the belief that what my husband has done for you to-day, is at least a benefit in that of your present comfort, and, if I mistake not, promise of its increase."

At that moment a servant coming into her presence and informing the lady that dinner was ready, she arose from her seat, and inviting the gentlemen to partake of it, they were soon seated at a table in the dining-room, where, accompanied by the lady alone, they dined upon a plainness of fare, partaking of plenty, without pomp, or appearance of parade.

As they were returning from the dining apartment to the parlor, the bell of the hall door rang, which was shortly followed by the entry of the stranger.

In his usual bluntness of manner, he said: "I am back, and if you gentlemen want to see Bruin before his coat is taken off, when I eat my dinner, I will come in the parlor for you."

"We thank you," returned Hyne.

"You need not do so," replied the stranger, as he passed them: and in the next moment the young friends were again in the parlor, and the stranger in the dining-room.

As soon as the stranger had partaken of his dinner, he returned to the parlor, and inviting the young gentlemen to accompany him, complied with his pro-

mise to show them what he had killed; and after a couple of men, under his direction, had taken the necessary care of the proceeds of his hunt, he, starting from the place at which they were standing, said: "Well, now that you have seen what I promised to show you, you can come into the house again." Here, and in presence of the lady, he said: "I am not meddlesome with the business of any one, without they ask me to do so, and not *then*, unless I *know* that I can do them a good. But though, what I have told you is a maxim with me, I always want to know the names of all whom accident places me in company with; for the sole reason, that if I see them again, I may know them, and knowing them, be the better judge whether I can or cannot do them a service, asked for, implied or understood," continued the stranger.

"Your kindness to us consequent upon our first meeting with you, to-day, was then as it is now, worthy of your request, and implied possibility of your future service to us, sir," replied Hyne. Then rising from a chair he had just resumed, said: "in that gentleman allow me to make you acquainted with Mr. George Laurence, and in myself, sir; I claim the privilege of introducing to your acquaintance Samuel Hyne.

Here the stranger rose from his seat, and taking his wife by the hand, replied: "In this lady and myself, I also ask the privilege as well as great pleasure of making you acquainted with Mr. and Mrs. Urnsden."

Not much of an intervention had taken place after the introduction of our, now, new acquaintances to one another, followed by a social conversation upon

general subjects, and upon which each seemed to lose sight of nothing calculated to interest, before a servant announced the arrival of Melvin and Standly at the door. After a few moments spent by them in the hall, divesting themselves of their great-coats and hats, the two latter entered the parlor.

"You will excuse the privilege taken, Mr. Urnsden," said Mr. Melvin, advancing with Standly, as he spoke, to the seats occupied by Urnsden and his wife, "of my introducing to yourself and lady, Mr. Standly, a guest and sojourner at the 'Mountain Inn.'"

"As with you, Mr. Melvin, so shall it ever be with Mr. Standly, a pleasure to me and my wife, Abitha, to see [addressing Standly] you, sir, at my house," replied Urnsden. Then turning to Laurence and Hyne, he continued, "I have learned from these young gentlemen, that they, are also your guests."

"Yes," replied Melvin, "and I am particularly pleased at seeing them here, for your house and its comforts will serve more effectually to keep them posted up in remembrance of the conveniences and pleasure of their native home at New York, than my humble abode, and their stay at the Mountain Inn, can."

The friendly remarks of Melvin and Urnsden relative to them, induced a reply from the young men, whereupon Hyne said: "Our introduction to, and hospitable reception met with from you, Mr. Urnsden, are highly prized by us, and those of Mr. Melvin, being weighed in a like balance, we will remember with fondness, not only during, but long subsequent to our arrival at, and yet to be continued sojourn, with the proprietor of the 'Mountain Inn.'"

"I thank you, Mr. Hyne," replied Melvin, "and here let me add, that you may remember it, with more intensity of thought hereafter, and upon your return home than you do now."

By this time the approach of sunset had put a stop at their first, and then longer continuance at the residence of Urnsden than expected, and in a few moments our three friends, accompanied by Melvin, were on their return to the "Mountain Inn."

After tea, and in their own room, our three friends were quite in that kind of humor, the opposite of loquacity. Each seemed busy at a mental review of past, present, and future events, and but little disposed to any casualties that might have a tendency to interrupt the respective progress of their thoughts. While in that mood, a gentle tap was heard at the door, and in the next moment Melvin was in their presence.

"You are kind and disposed to be sociable, Mr. Melvin," said Standly, "and on this occasion may become more desirably so to us, than at any previous time, since we have been with you."

"How so, sir," replied Melvin.

"Because," returned Standly, "so far as regards myself, and in which, I believe, I shall be joined by my young friends, I am particularly desirous of knowing more of the family to whom we have been introduced to-day."

"We concur with you, in this desire, Mr. Standly," was the simultaneous reply of both the young men.

"I will do that you desire, with much pleasure," resumed Melvin; and in the next moment our travellers were being pleasantly entertained by Melvin, in his account given of Urnsden and his family.

When Melvin had come to that part of his narration upon the incidents of his personal acquaintance with the family of Urnsden, he was observed to lose some of that animated expression, with which the previous part of his recital had been accompanied; and with a tremor of voice and vacant look, he exhibited signs of deep felt concern. But recovering himself, and after a few moment's pause, he said:—"Gentlemen, many years have now passed since the taking place of those occurrences, and the incidents accompanying them, connected with that family, in my knowledge, having sunk, as I had supposed, into a vortex of time, causing indifference, I had thought myself fully competent of performing my task of development to you, without the semblance of a return of melancholy in it. It has, however, and after a kind of mental torpidity returned upon me; and you will therefore excuse the (as you may justly suppose) weakness shown by me upon this occasion; when I shall make another attempt at complying with your request.

"Urnsden," continued Melvin, "being one of the number associated with me in boyhood sports, was, on his arrival at the age of about eighteen years, severed from his associates and school-fellows, by that sort of restless enterprise, too often producing the truth of the maxim with men that, 'some do not know when to let well-enough alone.' After an irreparable wreck of his father's large estate, by the visionary plans of the old gentleman, I lost sight of young Urnsden, till some time after the termination of our recent National struggles. When I, in my turn of adventures came to the spot, part of which you now

occupy, you can more easily imagine than I can describe, my surprise and pleasure at finding him here. Eccentric, blunt, and apparently uncivil in his character, I have lived in terms of close intimacy, and in all the routine of a neighbor from the period of which I last spoke, till the present one.

"In addition to his own family," continued Melvin, "he has five others *supposed to be relatives living with him at present;* among whom are, an elderly and two young ladies, the first-mentioned of whom was she who presided at my table the night of your arrival at the 'Inn.' From the incidents giving rise to hers, and the abode of the two young ladies there, may be attributed the feelings manifested by me a few minutes since."

"Who," interrupting Melvin, said Laurence, "were the persons playing that night on the piano and guitar?"

"The young men of Urnsden's family are proficients upon those instruments; and upon which, the wife of, for the time being, widowered Melvin once played. Upon this subject, however," continued Melvin, "I pray you, spare further enquiry as connected with it, are matters foreign to any promise to you, and which are peculiarly my own."

Here a straight-out, uninterrupted disclosure was put a stop to, followed by interrogatories put by the young gentleman, and answers returned by Melvin, in such particulars as to place Laurence and Hyne in possession of everything relative to the residents alone of Urnsden's family.

It had now advanced to a late hour, and after Melvin had expressed his wishes for pleasant dreams to

attend the young men, and a refreshing sleep for Standly, he withdrew from their presence.

In possession of that they most desired—the known residence of their then greatest favorites, *the deaf and dumb ladies*—Laurence and Hyne were little disposed to the acceptance of inducements offered to them by Morpheus, and were on that occasion visited by similar preventives to sleep, that were their attendants on their first night at the "Mountain Inn." Early the next morning they were up, and having consulted their toilet, had determined upon another adventure.

That caste of expression, usually the accompaniment of calm reflection, was noticed in the countenance of Standly, and still more so in the appearance of Melvin, who, after the breakfast hour had passed, was seen in the bar-room, engaged in close conversation with two old men, dressed in similar costume to that already spoken of. Occasionally their eyes were directed to, and rested upon, our three friends, as in their walk on the porch they passed and repassed in front of the room.

In a short time the strangers disappeared, and Melvin joining the company of his guests, took a seat with them in their own room, by a table, upon which lay their drawing and painting apparatus, with the sketches already mentioned, and to which they had that morning applied some additional touches, produced by their last night's reflection, aided by dream-like representations of fancy.

"What now, gentlemen!" said Melvin. "I am again in possession of something new on this occasion, as heretofore, whenever admitted into your apartment."

"To what have you reference, Mr. Melvin?" said Standly.

"In a general point of view, to social and interesting conversation; but now, to the scientific sketches seen upon this table, reminding me strikingly of those with whom I have the pleasure of a *personal* and *intimate* acquaintance," replied Melvin.

"You are complimentary to Mr. Hyne and myself, Mr. Melvin," replied Laurence, "and let me add, that the chief one of our present desires is, for opportunities to *complete* what is but *begun*."

The double-intender reply of Laurence was readily construed in the way meant, and Melvin, seemingly ignorant of the preferences entertained for the ladies in question by the young gentlemen, indifferently replied:

"You may perhaps have an opportunity of completing the likenesses begun, of their faces; but with any further acquaintance, however worthy you may both be of it, with the ladies to whom you allude, is, I think, doubtful. As, in the first place, they represent the misfortunes incident to the deaf and dumb; are supposed, though thus unfortunate, to be in love; and, withal, are under the control and direction of an exceedingly singular and knowing old genius, whom, to comprehend, will occupy more of your time than I imagine both or either of you are willing to bestow."

"We will try it, if aided," replied Laurence.

"Then," replied Melvin, "I am happy in being the humble instrument of its commencement." And taking from his coat pocket three sealed and directed notes, which he had received from one of the men who had just left, presented each with an invitation to

dine next day at the residence of Urnsden. At that Melvin withdrew, and as he closed their door after him, Standly said: "A new sphere is now offered for each of you young gentlemen to sustain; in doing so, take care that you are not made the dupes of fancy, and, upon the acquiring or diminishing scale, come off worse than when you entered the further plan of discovery."

CHAPTER XXIX.

Our shares of the capital of happiness afforded by this world, are frequently drawn upon by large drafts of ills.

At eleven o'clock the following day, our three friends, accompanied by Melvin, left the inn for the residence of Urnsden. Upon their arrival they were met by similar expressions of friendship to that shown them on the day of their first, as accidental, visit there. The grave salutations and replies of Urnsden to remarks and questions put, had been dwelt upon at some length in the account given of him by Melvin, so that those of his traveller guests were well versed in the proper way to take him in his remarks, questions or replies.

With the exception of the gentlemen from the inn, the dining party consisted of five others; two of whom were the persons seen the morning previous, but who, upon the present occasion, were neatly dressed, in which particular, and on the present occasion, all had been observant.

The hours in the parlor had passed sociably, and in an ordinary degree of politeness on the parts of Laurence and Hyne. Still the incentive to a further display of their knowledge and practice of etiquette, had not made their second appearance before them.

At about half an hour before dinner a messenger informed Urnsden that the ladies intended making their appearance.

"Let them do so," was the reply, and another specimen of the politeness of Urnsden. The servant withdrew, and in a short time re-opening the door, Mrs. Urnsden and Mrs. Dierdoffe (for the time being) arm-in-arm, followed by the two young ladies, in a like position, were in the presence of the gentlemen. Here Urnsden rose from his chair, and addressing Standly, Laurence and Hyne, said: "You know my wife: the lady she has by the hand is Mrs. Dierdoffe; here (advancing as he spoke) are *her* daughters, Miss Jane and Miss Eliza." Then making a signal by way of a notice of his intentions, and placing himself arm-in-arm between them, in rather a mellowed and expressive tone of voice, unusual with him, continued, "And here, gentlemen, is Miss Susan and Miss Ellen, nieces of, and the daughters to a brother of, Mrs. Dierdoffe; bearing in their persons two of the misfortunes incident to life—that of the *deaf* and *dumb*."

At the last expression of Urnsden, the young gentlemen exhibited marks of some confusion, which being noticed, the ladies made signals to be, and in the next moment they were, seated—Laurence by the side of Ellen, and Hyne by the side of Susan Dierdoffe. In that position, and on the part of the ladies, was presented to each gentlemen the elegant note-

books and pencils noticed on a former occasion, and which, on the present one, were used with no small degree of delight by those who my readers may readily suppose at the commencement of perspective happiness.

Thus engaged in a social, yet pantomimic style of communicating ideas, their time passed pleasantly, and interrupted by nothing, save the call to the dining-room, to which, through the gallantry of our young travellers, the apparently deaf and dumb ladies were escorted.

Here, not forgetting that series of etiquette, the imperative duty of *gentlemen* when in the company of ladies, our two friends were seen to be polite and attentive to all present. And on returning to the parlor, a like routine of the agreeable was being strictly aimed at from the mutual efforts of the entertained as from the entertainers.

The designs of Ellen and Susan were, to intercept, as often and as much as possible, the, at that time, entire attentions to them of their new acquaintances, and for that purpose had made such remarks as in reply to, soon brought in contact with the young travellers the remaining ladies and gentlemen present.

The signals from the deaf and dumb with which those around them were familiar, and the perfect acquaintance with their use, in the minds of Ellen and Susan, gave to others an advantage in communication much superior in point of facility to those of our young friends. In that particular, Standly, being in the secrets of the general confederacy (part only of whom were then present) was promptly aided by young Rightquick, whenever it was necessary in con-

veying his immediate remarks to the ladies, and their answers returned.

Just previous to the arrangement of their plan, Ellen and Susan had succeeded in bringing Laurence and Hyne into a conversation relative to the pleasures and advantages of society in a city, and its comforts, compared with those of a like nature in that of a life in the country, the latter of which our ladies in question were in favor.

In rapid succession, the looks spoken of on former occasions were seen to pass between our travellers and the deaf and dumb ladies, the results of which, in the preponderance of their replication and the purposely incidental comments from those present, proclaimed the ladies victors. Desirous of being still more so, and with a view the better to arrive at some certainty of what might be the condition of impressions by that time formed of them in the minds of our young friends, it was courteously ceded to the gentlemen in question, that the chances for the attainment of beauty and wealth—the predominant impetus to marriage—but not intellect, presented a more extensive one in cities, than the like extent of territory or numerical order did for the country.

Here a momentary cessation to conversation ensued, when Urnsden, passing in front of the piano, and near which Jane and Eliza Dierdoffe had taken seats, asked of the former where the violins were that a few days before had occupied a pile of music then lying on the piano? This question was put in the hearing of our three friends; and Jane, exhibiting some confusion, replied:

"Thinking that you would not object to the privi-

lege taken, uncle, I sent them and your flutes, by Sanco, to Mr. Melvin, a few evenings since."

At the reply of Miss Dierdoffe, and before Melvin could say anything, there was a simultaneous rising from their seats of the two friends, and each presenting himself before Jane, expressed his thanks and the obligations they felt themselves under to her for the favor she had, unknown to either, bestowed upon them, and the pleasure they then felt at being made acquainted with the source from whence it had emanated.

"Then," replied Eliza, who had at that time joined in the conversation, "since we are thus apprized of your being amateurs, we would be most happy, gentlemen, in uniting our efforts with those of yours in music, on any evening suiting your convenience to join us."

"O, yes!" replied Urnsden; "*all* my family are not *deaf* and *dumb*, and those of it who *can hear and speak* are fond of music. But whether or no they of it who pretend to play can do so before you, with that taste with which you have heard others in your fashionable city, remains for us at some future time to know."

It was now at a late hour of the evening, and our three friends, with Melvin, returned to the "inn," where, in pursuance of their custom, our travellers, soon after supper, retired to their room, and there commenced their comments upon the occurrences of the past day, as had been their usual practice on each successive and passed one, since their stop at the house of their familiar host, Melvin.

Standly, Mentor-like, was ensconced by all that forte of mature reflection, that riper age and long experience

gives over the vacillancy reverse of youthful life; while Laurence and Hyne in that volatile and delusive strain of expression consequent upon unripe and unexperienced opinions, thought of nothing, and talked of nothing but the opportunity that had that day been offered them of proffering their claims to the hearts and hands of the heretofore strangers to them, but now known, and beloved nymphs of the mountains.

After listening to much of expressive eulogy, the usual attendant upon and gatherer of the scattered arrows of blind love, Standly, in his usual position of having an elbow upright on the table, with his head resting upon the back part of the fingers of his half-closed hand, said: "But little else than astonishment has occupied my mind, at your deportment since our arrival here, young gentlemen. And it seems to me that the return of each successive day opens to my view new sources of surprise. We know that which has passed, and amidst which, the spending of the day just gone, adds to your calculations a new starting point. I allude to your attachments for, and your determined intents to address, those trebly poor girls to whom we were introduced to-day. I say trebly poor, because they are deaf, because they are dumb, and, in all probability, because they may be the dependents upon an uncle, who has, as you have seen, two daughters with whom to share his, perhaps, but limited estate."

The lecture of Standly was answered by the young men with every earnest of intent, accompanied by a due deference of the giver of it, and respect to his offered opinions, ending with their assurance to Standly that they both felt what they had said, and that what they

had said and still felt was so interwoven with what they thought the only sure basis of their earthly happiness, that the first opportunity offered should be seized upon, to make their proposals, to the, although deaf and dumb, as they believed, highly gifted ladies: and whose misfortunes would not prevent them from making each a wife, each a companion, and each an ornament to their youth, as well as a comfort in the decline of their lives.

That kind of discussion with the sentiments entertained and expressed relative to the ladies in question, was what Standly most wished for, as the representative of the parents of his young charge; and the following morning the account of his conversation with them, and their determined course, was, at his earliest convenience, related to Melvin, with whom Standly passed the greater part of his time.

Towards evening of that day, and at the close of several hours spent upon their landscape views and favorite sketches, before spoken of, our young men were heard practising upon the violins and flutes, with which, by the kindness of Miss Dierdoffe, they had been favored. At this time, Standly, accompanied by Melvin, entered their apartment, and, after taking their seats, the visit to Urnsden, and incidents there, were adverted to.

"I cannot but suppose you, Mr. Melvin," said Hyne, "from the information already given us, familiar with every particular connected with that family, and on the present occasion do hope, you will not think me impertinently inquisitive, nor impute to my motives, any improper designs, in calling your attention to some events that took place there yesterday,

with a few matters occurring elsewhere, to my knowledge, since my arrival here. And now, sir," continued Hyne, "if you will answer them, I will put my questions, and will be much pleased to have your replies."

At the unexpected remarks of Hyne, and the request made of him, Melvin was silent for some moments, and within that time like requests were made of him by the other two gentlemen.

"It is not my place," said Melvin, "at least for the present, to ask of you, gentlemen, why such remarks as have led to them, nor the reasons governing you in in your proposed inquiries of me were made? And all I can say is,—that I may not tell you all, but as much as may, perhaps, answer your purposes, whatever they may be. With a further proposition on my part, that, if ever the time comes, in which similar requests shall be made of you, that you will now promise to perform, and to keep inviolable, similar trusts reposed in you by me, upon things you may be informed of, divulging them to none, except you first shall have obtained my permission to do so."

Melvin's reply and his injunctions, and in which his whole deportment appeared concerned while making, baffled for a time the objects had in view by the travellers. For they had already come to the conclusion, from his frankness to them, on former occasions, that what he had then said, as well as that Melvin might now speak of—could be by them, if occasion required, repeated; as well as giving their author for it; the name of the keeper of the Mountain Inn.

When Melvin had finished speaking, our three friends gave each other a look as much as to say, in

the several expressions of their countenances, "Will you agree to his proposition?"

Here, Standly assuming the province of speaker in reply, said; "We doubt not your sincerity in friendship to us, Mr. Melvin, nor the sound reasons you have for placing us under injunctions of secresy, upon matters that you just expressed a willingness to impart to us. In assuming the privilege of requesting information of you—you may have already entertained the opinion that we were stepping beyond the limits allowed strangers, and the only recompense we can make for having done so, is to assure you that the most profound secresy will be observed and practised by us upon all matters in which it may please you to instruct us relative to and connected with the family of Mr. Urnsden. And if what I have just assured you of," continued Standly, "is a sufficient voucher, whereby to give a credit to that effect, we should be glad of your consent to oblige us."

It is a well-known fact to my readers, that Standly was playing a double part—that he was associated in the confederacy with Melvin—that they had been seen in frequent and long conversations, and in the immediate presence of the young men—that both Standly and Melvin spoke and acted in such a way as induced at different times thoughts of suspicion.

Like all others under the influence of Love in broken doses, or in other words—hesitation, doubting, suspense, hoping, and desponding thoughts—they were desirous of having some one in whom to confide and with whom to speak freely; and situated as they were, it was natural for them to look in that light upon

Standly. If the latter should prove an Iscariot, it remains for the future of this tale to discover.

At the close of Standly's remarks, Melvin replied, "That he had not, upon the conditions agreed to by the young gentlemen and Standly, the least objection to give it, if a further information of Urnsden and his family could afford any additional satisfaction to them." Adding, that as it had then advanced to a late hour of the night, and having some business to attend to, he would return to their room at an early hour the next day.

Thus saying, Melvin bade them "good night," leaving our three friends to reflections upon what had passed, with suppositions upon the future.

CHAPTER XXX.

We often miss the attainment of our desires from the oversight in the means made use of to possess the objects of them.

DURING the interval between the adieu of Melvin and the time at which they returned, several questions had been put to Standly, by Laurence and Hyne. And among the most material ones were, "If he, (Standly) had at any time since their arrival at the inn, cause to suppose, or had come to the conclusion, that Melvin was deceitful in his deportment towards them."

Upon the reply of Standly in the negative, it put a stop to further interrogatories for the time, and in a

few moments after our three friends were in the keeping of Morpheus.

My readers may recollect distinctly, that there was not only a perfect silence observed relative to the designs of perpetuity between the parents of our ladies and gentlemen, but also that there was nothing upon which to predicate the supposition that they were even known to one another. Consequently, the acts of the whole confederacy, with Melvin at their head, were so entirely unknown to our young strangers, as in every move relative to his object to give Melvin an ascendancy in the perfection of his scheme. Those advantages, connected with the apparent candor and seeming plausibility of Standly, gave Melvin nothing to fear; and on the following morning, after an early breakfast, he made his appearance before our three friends. Melvin seemed quite collected, and his whole demeanor portrayed forethought and that kind of affability calculated to arrest any thing like that of suspicion.

MELVIN'S ACCOUNT OF URNSDEN AND HIS FAMILY.

In an allusion given to his promise, Melvin said:

"I have already told you, gentlemen, of the boyday acquaintance existing between Urnsden and myself—of our long separation and renewal of that acquaintance after a termination of many years. And that which I shall now speak of relative to him, will create a medley of thought with you, partaking of emotions thought little of, of him by those to whom I am speaking.

"Impetuous and reckless in his disposition, and not

having moral courage sufficient to stand firm and resolute amid the ills that had attended his family, Urnsden was seen to give way under them, till, at length, he disappeared, and no one knowing where he went, or what object he had in view when he went, I, with others, feeling more for him than he did for himself, soon got into the prevailing opinion that he had made a mockery of the gifts of Heaven by putting an end to that, not his by any alienable right, but as a boon from the Most High.

"Not dead, as was supposed, but long lost to that circle of society in which he had been accustomed to move, I found him here as you have been told.

"An adventurer amid, not many years before, these by savage occupied wilds, and seated one night with a few others of my brave companions before a log fire at the entrance of our tent, a small party was seen in their advance to where we were. On their nearer approach I discovered the party to consist of two women, two men, four little girls and two boys. The men and boys were costumed after the manner in which you first saw Urnsden a few days since, and the huntsmen seen the morning after your arrival here. The women and girls were clad after the costume of the present time. And here, let me add, that I shall never forget the feelings with which the younger two of the fair girls inspired me. When they had gotten to our tent, a particular degree of courteousness, ever the attendent of the virtuous fair of creation, was developed by the women, and the force of precept and example was also discovered in the little prattlers of both sexes, as they stood by the sides of those supposed to be their mothers.

"One of my party was engaged fixing log seats for those of whom I have just spoken, while I was engaged talking to the men yet standing, but who a few moments after were also seated by the fire.

"Age with the consequences of time and circumstances had so changed his general deportment, as at first sight to make it doubtful of whether one of the strangers before me was, or was not Urnsden: till, at length pressed by similar impressions and feelings to those of my own, one of them addressing me, said:

"'Stranger, from whence come you?'

"'From near Charleston, South Carolina,' I replied.

'"If so, and I mistake not,' said he, 'Will Urnsden and Jack Melvin have again met, and that after a separation of more than thirty years.'

"I could scarcely credit the assertion; but when he had rolled up the left sleeve of his deer-skin coat, and showed me a scar received in my defence, I was no longer a 'Thomas'—and in the next moment our right hands were firmly clinched in each others.

"That greeting over, Urnsden introduced me to the women and men present, and I in return made him and them acquainted with my party. By this time the night had run over Time's list to one of its late hours, and the women and children expressing a desire to rest, Urnsden and the man with him accompanied by their charge, left our camp with the promise of himself to return to us the next morning.

"Accordingly he did so, and while there, informed me in a long and particular statement of all his troubles, of his few pleasures, and of the many difficulties he had encountered.

"Urnsden told me, that, in less than a month after

his departure from the city of Charleston he had become a land-pirate, and associated with a regular train of them that infested the secret passes in the States of the two Carolina's—those of Georgia, and at that time, extensive State of Virginia. The scenes of horror and despair that he was not only frequently compelled to behold, but to engage in, in order to gain from others of the company his portion of the profits of excursions for plunder, were many. Till at length being awakened to a sense of the degradation and horrid modes by which to gain, at the best, a miserable support, he determined to retire from the company, with some ten thousand dollars of booty, that more than twenty years service had made his, not by fair, but by the basest and most foul means.

"Possessed of gold and valuables of a precious nature, Urnsden's next object was, how best to regain society and maintain in it his former position. But here, as he has since frequently told me, conscience ever uses him severely, and instead of a return to the routine of gayer circles of life, he has contented himself to settle where he now is; where, in the society of the family that now surrounds him, he has the appearance of being more happy than he really is.

"From the force of habit in the associations of time passing between youth and advanced life, he appears at intervals rough and extremely rude in his manners. But there is a virtue that lies hidden under the mass of ruins to which his more polished manners and deportment have become victims."

"I have now, gentlemen," continued Melvin, "brought Urnsden step by step before you, and in your minds keeping, till within his own house it may

be present with your memories, of how he and his family met with and received you at the dinner given you two days since; and, whether you think him beneath your further notice or not, consequent upon the account thus far given you of him, remains for two important incidents to disclose, and they are:—

"First. That he is the supposed uncle of the deaf and dumb! and, secondly, being so, whether or not, they can any longer command your respect and admiration?

"Of the now elderly ladies, if you please, of Urnsden's household," continued Melvin, "I shall say but little more for the present; for it is an undeniable truth, that however base, of low origin, illiterate and unnoticed human nature may be, in such spheres as I have represented Urnsden, that the moment some lucky chance gives to them wealth, every feature I have mentioned is cast into an eternity of oblivion, and the idolized virtues of such, consequent upon wealth alone, are seen placed in the front ranks of fashion, and there asked after by all. Such are the, at present, high-toned sentiments of the few settlers of this region of country, relative to Urnsden and his family; which will, in a few years from now, grow into such strength and virtue, consequent upon the influence of their wealth, as to secure for it the highest tributes of esteem from abroad, as well as among those by whom they are now surrounded. And," continued Melvin, "however much or little you may, from your own observations in the future, see to approve or disapprove of, in the elderly ladies of Urnsden's family, remains likewise for an unknown future to determine.

"The two young girls, then children, and to whom you were introduced a few days since, in Urnsden's house, as grown young ladies, I have before said, did at the time I first saw them, as they have continued to do since, inspire me with feelings of deep concern, and I think you will concur with me in a similitude of sentiment, emanating from a representation of the deaf and dumb before you on that occasion. It is not my design, nor indeed do I believe it my province, to tell you now whose daughters those of whom I am speaking are; and when," continued Melvin, "that disclosure shall have been made—if ever—by me, it will be attended by impressions upon your minds highly commendatory, or to sink them far beneath your most ordinary respect. So far, however, as care in their raising and education is concerned, you are doubtless gentlemen of too good discernment not to have discovered, in your late interview with them, that in that particular no pains have been spared.

"The appearance of personal defects are most frequently by order of the most High, and upon those in whom they appear are but too often hurled the sneers of shallow-brained intellects. The most learned are sensitive in such cases, but, like the magnetic needle in its vibrations, are so only momentarily. This I have thought proper to mention, not because you are supposed to belong to that class of beings who think it a mark of good sense to make contemptible remarks upon the works of the great 'I Am,' but to place you upon your guard in your future interviews with the deaf and dumb in the family of Urnsden.

"Of the other two girls—now also grown, and looked upon as ladies in the house of that eccentric

genius, Urnsden—I shall say only, that they also have been well raised, and equally well educated as those just spoken of; but of them, as of the former, the veil of mystery now covering them must not yet be drawn aside, which, when done, as I have before said, will secure for the four concerned, your much rivalled esteem or utter contempt.

"I have now," continued Melvin, "only two other children to speak of, that attracted my attention at the camp-fire, already spoken of, and they are the, then, boys, now young men, seen at the dinner given you by Urnsden. They, too, have been properly raised, and being conversant with business, and the care and attention necessary thereto, are beginning to be spoken of, by those who know them, as rapidly forming for themselves foundations of future usefulness and envied rank in their advance among the incidents belonging to life.

"Urnsden," continued Melvin, "is said to be very partial to those young men, and however wrapped in mystery, as the family now seems to be, with those knowing little or nothing about it, the prevailing opinion is, that the deaf and dumb ladies are to be the wives of those two young men. And furthermore, that he will dispose of the remaining two of his charge in such a way as to reflect credit upon himself and happiness and prosperity upon them.

"Here, gentlemen, suffer me to speak of another trait in the character of Urnsden, omitted in my remarks of him personally; and that is, that though reckless and indolent, and somewhat inclined to intemperate habits in his early life, he has often declared that he will never give his daughters (as he calls

them) to any who are not personally known to him, or credibly reported to him so to be, possessed of a knowledge of business, of habits of industry and carefulness, a love and practice of them, and an aversion to habitual intemperance. With these qualifications, united to an honorable integrity, Urnsden has repeatedly said that he will cheerfully give his daughters, though such husbands may not have at the time they may become so, one cent with which to commence the marriage estate.

"I have now, gentlemen," continued Melvin, "completed my promise; and if what I have said has contributed to strengthen your whatever purposes further intended here, my wishes are certainly with you for success."

Rising from his seat as the last remark was being made, Melvin withdrew, and in the next half hour our three friends were seated at the dining-table.

There are times, in the mental condition of men, when that which is necessary for the support of life (a good appetite) is frequently denied us. At their dinner-table, much indifference was manifested on the part of our young friends, while the eldest of the three did not require a command like to that given to one of old, but, on the contrary, used his knife and fork with a gracefulness and ease exhibiting good manners, whilst he partook of the respective varieties of their table with as much dignified composure and satisfaction as a distinguished partizan of the American Revolution did, while feasting with the British officer upon "*sweet potatoes*."

The sagacity of the elder of our three friends, was then, as it had been constantly, upon the alert, and lis-

tening to more than he chose replying to, of the allusions made by the young men to Melvin's partial disclosure; in that state of mind within himself and the young gentlemen's comments, they entered their apartment; where, by your permission, reader, I shall leave them for the present, to go elsewhere, with a view to your amusement and pleasure.

CHAPTER XXXI.

The appearance of ills in the affairs of life, are sometimes productive of happy consequences.

THE impulse to the passion of love is assignable to many causes; upon the different proprieties of which the hearts only of those who are votaries of and solicited for at its shrine, are capable of deciding. Sometimes a single glance of that invariably expressive talisman of the soul, the eye; at others, a single expression of the countenance; a sentence peculiarly expressed; at others, the attitude, form, and external appearance of make and shape; and, again, that which is most lasting, and by which all the vicissitudes of life can be thwarted as well as borne with, according to cases—the strength and qualities of a well-cultivated mind; had, in their respective natures, an attempted at influence been offered to the consideration of the ladies of Urnsden's house. Nor was that all: for wealth, with its weight of influence, had been tendered to them, with the hearts and hands of many, as yet to no desired effect.

Hence our ladies were still free to think and act upon further solicitations, as they thought most conducive to their future of this world's happiness.

It had been the constant practice of Standly to visit the mansion whenever he could do so unnoticed by our young gentlemen, and particularly when they were engaged at reading, or in their amusement of music, and now favorite employment at the sketches and drawings spoken of in former chapters.

In one of his visits, and in answer to some inquiries made of him, among other matters relative to Laurence and Hyne, Standly spoke of their boasted indifference to the society of ladies, and the want of female influence over them, so far as any particular affection was concerned. Adding that it had been a favorite expression with those gentlemen (and of which my readers have been already apprized) that, "She must be a Venus of whom I would ask the question, 'Will you marry me?'"

That information was enough for the present use of our ladies, and upon the receipt of it, they, from that moment, intended adopting such a course as would afford a slight chastisement for the lofty opinions of the gentlemen, and to test the maxim of Mr. Laurence and Mr. Hyne.

Already had a favorable impression been created in the minds of the young ladies for the gentlemen in question; but before the most remote intimation of it should be given to them, direct or indirect, it had become a settled-upon determination with Ellen and Susan to let the young gentlemen know from experience, and from a round of purposed difficulties thrown in their way, that a total recantation of such

opinions as they entertained, and had expressed, was required of them. And that women, though not all Venuses in point of beauty, are yet equally entitled to the sincere affections of men, as those who are so; and are, also, no less capable of making men happy under the should-be (but too often abused) endeared title of wife, as those who are endowed with every elegance of form, face and feature.

Night after night, after all was quiet at the Inn, Melvin went to the mansion, and returned from it early in every and each arrived morning. There in familiar converse in furtherance of the plans of the ladies, he was, as has been heretofore seen, at the head of their arrangements and intention. Here was also had occcasional interviews with the huntsmen before spoken of, and who I shall now introduce to the further notice of my readers under the names of Charles Everett, Henry Neville, Rufus Clement, Lucien Arnsdale, William Irvin and James Yancy.

The well known integrity and high bearing of those young men, and the intimate acquaintance of Melvin and his family with them, and their parents, were preventatives on the part of the ladies to the least hesitation in associating them with their intended plan; and relative to the estimation in which the ladies were held by the gentlemen, I may only refer my readers to the declaration of the huntsmen on the night they assembled at the *Inn* preceding the deer hunt.

As yet and since that morning, Lawrence and Hyne had made the acquaintance of none, with the exception of those already before my readers, and so far as information is concerned, as being obtained from servants at or about the Inn, and at the mansion, our

young gentlemen were completely debarred, for they, being without the proper signals to obtain it, were, at every attempt at inquiry, answered by those to whom they applied, with a particular use of the fore finger of the right hand, and of which my readers have already been apprized.

Although in the ultimate, and in that part of their intended plan of penance, for what the ladies thought a want of due respect for their sex in their eastern admirers, they resorted to a greater degree of severity than necessary for the offence committed; it was the intention of the ladies, even in that instance, to make the victims of their revenge as comfortable as their respective treatments would admit of.

It has been said by one of the leading characters in this work, and that much to the honor and credit of the fair sex, "that where ladies take an interest in advancing the happiness of our sex, their acts are from the best of motives, and a less danger of ills resulting from them than otherwise. I shall go further and beg leave of nature's fair to add: that they seldom, if ever, fail of success, while those of like effort in men for men, are but too often merged in difficulties, and resulting in a worse condition of those for whom intended, than when commenced.

My readers have been informed of the main object had in view in the "deer hunt," already spoken of. The "cavern," of which an account has also been given, being in a state of nature and unqualified by anything in art, with which to render its habitation even a tolerable one to those who had been accustomed to the conveniences and comfort of fine houses in the city of New York, was now one of the next

objects of consideration, with our ladies. For that purpose they assembled their confederates and in general consultation, determined upon preparing the two rooms of the second apartment, and that of the third or "Chamber of Death" for Lawrence and Hyne during their captivity by the "*bandits*," who were to occupy the front or entrance room of the cavern.

Close was to assume the appearance of a maniac, combining with it at intervals that of a soothsayer, and occasionally to be at the Inn, for the purpose of watching the movements of our young friends, and in their walks and rambles to place himself, as if by accident, in their way.

Handy was to attend upon and act a servant's part to the confederates, while they, commanded by one of their party as chief, were to act in separate parties as a guard over their prisoners.

In the rooms of the cavern destined for the safe keeping of the prisoners, were to be placed articles, as trophies, taken at different times by the bandits. And in the Chamber of Death were, in addition to fragments of human skeletons then there, from time unknown, to be interspersed here and there, appearances of rapine and murder; and as for Standly, should occasion require it, he was to betray his young friends and appear in evidence against them.

I have now given a plot of the future, to appear in the subsequent chapters of this work; and think not, my fair readers, that the description just given of the *order* and *intentions* of two of your sex in a further development was, with them, a prepared intent to take life. But, on the contrary, to save it. And, in their own way to elevate those against whom they

may at the present time, seem inimical to conditions far preferable to those now about to take place. Bear with me a while longer, and in a few subsequent chapters from where your kind indulgences are at present with your humble author, he will endeavor to place things in that sort of light for which your sex are ever most celebrated—*virtue*, *constancy*, *kindness*, *love* and *mercy*.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Our motives and acts for honorable purposes, generally carry with them the weight and influence of success.

A NEW field was now being opened, when the mental and physical action of the distinct parties, as mentioned in the preceding chapter, were to continue their operations. The one in the concentration of all that force of imagination, power of elegance, suavity of manners, and impressively pleasing look and deportment which Cupid, in his ordered array of the tender passions, engendered in the bosom; and from whence to flow through the mediums just mentioned upon the objects of our affections; the other, though the conductors of it had, ultimately, a like object in view, and had chose to arrive at it by other means, is seen, for the time being, intent upon obeying orders to the letter, and with false pretensions and all its retinue of disreputableness, descending to that of the glaring appearance of apparently intended murder itself; and to make love the subordinate to

humor for the present, in order to its more brilliant display in the future.

For some days after the disclosure made by Melvin, Laurence and Hyne were observed to be more than usually silent, and no remark whatever had been made by them relative to Melvin, Urnsden, or of the ladies. The books that had been sent to them, no one knew by whom, were now taken up and read with constant and unabated attention; and the hours as they passed were divided by the gentlemen into the respective periods for refreshment, labor and sleep.

Those considered for labor, were the hours devoted to reading, study, music and drawing, subdivided into separate time for each avocation. Thus employed, they were seldom out of their room, which circumstance gave Standly a better opportunity to study the part assigned him, and watching from time to time, the occurrences upon which he might be called upon to testify; and when occasion offered, had interviews with the ladies at the mansion and with others in his double capacity of seeming friend and seeming foe.

At one time, and in one of their meetings, a discrepancy of opinion was discovered upon the subject of who amongst the confederates should be appointed their chief in command.

Each of the huntsmen, in his warmth of desire, contended for that honor, as, upon it rested an event, not now to be made known, but ere the last line of this work shall have been written, will, among other things, be forthcoming in its closing chapter. All being candidates, and each one not allowed to cast a vote for himself, after some trial, the attempt at elec-

tion was dropped, and the affair of appointment referred to Miss Ellen and to Miss Susan Dierdoffe.

With a view to an amicable settlement of the matter in dispute, the ladies decided that each one of the six gentlemen should draw one card from a deck, and that he who should hold in his hand the "ace of diamonds," or the nearest in a less number of spots to the like card, should be the one appointed to command, and to the control and government of the whole party.

That meeting was in the library, where the occurrences that had there taken place, in times past and gone, are all probably still fresh in the memory of my readers. But a subsequent as singular event to that of a declaration of love, and a favorable answer returned, remains to be told as having taken place there.

One thing at a time, however, and there will be less danger of confusion; and if the lack of interest and pleasure to my readers is now mine, in the heretofore material furnished, the future may add a zest to all that has been written, and obtain for itself a respectable reception in the estimation of those in whose hands this work may fall.

The company was in a short time furnished with a new deck of cards by Melvin, and handing it to one of the ladies, she separated the diamond cards from the rest of the deck, and in a few moments after the result was ascertained.

At the ladies' request, each gentleman drew from her hand a card, and holding them in silence until directed; at an order given, they deposited them upon the table before her. The moment it was done, it

was accompanied by a simultaneous expression from them, of "Nevelle is our leader!"

"And," exclaimed Melvin, "well he may be, for his card is the ace of diamonds itself!"

"A good omen, Mr. Nevelle," said Urnsden, "and that to which I wish to draw your attention, as one of your first official acts, is to recommend your appointment of an assistant, or second in command; and my reasons for it are, that your duties may not always enable you to be present, in which event a loss of time and an availment of urgent circumstances would be the pernicious consequences."

"True," replied Melvin.

At that moment, the eyes of all present were turned upon Nevelle, who, rising from his chair, and, after a graceful bow given to the ladies and gentlemen, said,

"I know of nothing ever creating a greater pleasure to me, than that which, it seems, chance alone has destined me to. And that is the chief-in-command, wherein the happiness of two, at least, (looking at Ellen and Susan) of our long-known and esteemed friends are concerned. That their plan for obtaining the object of their affections, and forming a future basis of their future bliss, is novel, none can pretend to deny! In it I am called to act a conspicuous as responsible part; and associated with the gentlemen I have the pleasure as well as honor to be, no care will be spared with our joint efforts, in the like chivalric duties before us, to terminate the plan intrusted to our execution, for our lady friends and all others concerned, in the best, highest and most pleasingly satisfactory manner within our power."

Then addressing his comrades, he said,

"Gentlemen, blame me not for the impossibility with me to appoint you all to office, however much it might be my wish to do so. Our raising and educations have been together, and were it practicable upon the present occasion, I should make no distinction, nor portray partiality. But the latter is imperative." Here a momentary pause ensued, when placing his eyes upon him, with an expressive look of esteem and confidence, he said, "I appoint to my second in command, Mr. Charles Everett."

At his enunciation the room resounded with loud applause from all in it; and after a few moments, upon the necessity of a genteel deportment in the discharge of their several duties, Nevelle resumed his seat; after which followed a social and agreeable evening, spent in the family of Urnsden, when, at a late hour, the junior part of our confederates left for their respective homes.

"Thus far, and since the promise given by Melvin, before the change to that name from his real one had taken place, to make a report to our friends in the city of New York, relative to the movements of their sons and other matters connected with them, no letter or even a note had ever been written. And, with regard to the letters of the young gentlemen to their parents, no answers had been received. That state of affairs with them, had been previously taken care of by Melvin, whose intimate acquaintance with the postmaster, some fifteen or twenty miles distant, had produced the practice of having all letters directed to any of his family or persons residing at the Mountain Inn, sent directly to his personal care. Thus, the chance

for interception being in his power, it was invariably practiced by Melvin upon all letters written by our young travellers, no matter whether to relatives, or to whom else, in or about the city of New York. The practice, however, was different with regard to Standly, inasmuch as the letters passing to and from him, were regularly received, and in no instance was there a single interception.

That state of affairs would, at times, create surprise and awaken in the minds of our young friends a disposition to murmur and wonder at such apparent neglect. But the false philosophy of Standly was Falstaff-like, at the bottom of all of it.

Proud of the position he then occupied, and for reasons which may be hereafter spoken of, Neville lost no time in putting into effect the requirements entrusted to his care; and among the first objects to which his attention was drawn, were the rooms in the Cavern.

The residence of Close was made his head-quarters, where for several days the whole of his command were actively employed in collecting borrowed articles by way of trophies, and making such arrangement of them as would be most conducive of effect in impressing the imagination with an idea that it was in reality the rendezvous and residence of bandits.

The first object in the interior of the Cavern to which he directed the attention of his company, was the clearing of the intricate passes; and, that he did by having the loose rock removed, so that in a short time to pass and repass through those routes which were before difficult, a slight bend of the body only, was now necessary.

In the ante-chamber was erected, and on each side of the entrance door, two berths, one over the other, sufficiently broad to contain two persons each. Upon those places for sleep was placed supplies of deer and bear skins, to which was added a plentiful supply of bedding and furniture necessary to comfort. As an additional convenience to that apartment, there was made in it a sort of fire-place built of stone work, presenting a front with hearth attached, after the manner of the "Franklin stove."

From its top was built a chimney connected with the aperture in the front wall; around and about that fixture, was a place for everything, and everything in its place, relative to the sleeping, cooking and washing for of the confederates.

The outer door, or main entrance to the cavern, was composed of oak batten, of about an inch thick, fastened together on the interior side by slats of like material. On each side and above the doorway, was made a casement, in which the door was swung, and moved upon a strong pair of iron hinges. Its fastenings were simply two wooden bars, at equal distance, placed crossway of the door, and resting in iron staples at each end. On the outside of that door, between the wood casement of the interior and Nature's stone casement outward, was placed a steel spring, attached to a wire, affixed to a small bell that was suspended immediately over the fire-place; the touch of that spring announced the arrival, and wish to enter of any one or more of the company; and others, invested with the proper signals performed upon the bell for entry, as by that means, and no other, was an admission to the cavern allowed.

In the second apartment, and in two rooms, which it seemed nature had intended it to represent, was exhibited a greater display of artificial work. The entry door leading into the first room of the apartment was made of like material with those of the main entrance, differing only in the mode of fastening, being locks instead of wooden bars and iron staples. For the passway, from one to the other of the chambers, a frame and neat casement had been prepared, extending to a height of eight feet, leaving a space between that and the works of nature, at the upper part of the door-way, of about two feet; that recess was filled by a neatly framed window-sash, containing two rows of gas-lights.

Upon four of the rock-pedestals, as it were, situated in each room of the second apartment, about six one way and five feet the other way, in the corner of each room was placed a wooden frame, having a head and foot board to it, intended to answer the purpose of a bedstead. These frames were covered with battens, and upon each was placed a straw and feather bed, with all of every article of covering; and furniture necessary to comfort. A like process of framing for tables was observed as that already resorted to for bedsteads; and for that purpose, a frame, as neat as circumstances would admit of, occupied four others of the elevated rocks in each room, while the remainder of them answered the purposes of seats. Upon the floors were laid riveted boards, which, about the bedsteads were covered with bear-skins.

In both of the chambers were deposited boxes, trunks, and other materials, with a view to the representation of plunder taken at different periods, by the

supposed inhabitants of this subterranean dwelling. Among the articles of value were, several caskets of jewelry, and other valuables of gold and silver, deposited in small boxes and placed here and there throughout the rooms. Added to these, was a small mirror, with comb and brush, wash-bowl, soap, pitcher, and silver tumbler, placed in a sort of wash-stand in each room. The apartments thus arranged were lighted by several small oil lamps, suspended by wire from the projections that here and there emanated from the crystal columns in each.

The Chamber of Death!—That apartment displayed an appearance by no means favorable to even a tolerably pleasant reflection. It had also its door and its lock and resembled much the appearance of a dissecting room! Such apartments must be as a necessary benefit to man. And think not, my fair readers, that the scenes and operations to which surgery as a science calls the attention in a dissecting apartment, of many talented men, that those gentlemen are any the less worthy of your esteem and regard. Two lamps only lighted this apartment, as if to corroborate the solemn grandeur it had, once or more, perhaps, represented; and was still bearing an impressive resemblance to—a place of horror and despair.

Having finished his, then, necessary operations at the cavern, Nevelle and his command, on the following day waited upon, and made a report of his proceedings to the ladies at the mansion, where we will leave them for the present, and until some other events take place making it necessary to bring them collectively or severally again before us.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

From unexpected and, indeed, unlooked for sources, are often derived respect, rank and wealth; the first gives weight, the second influence, and the third power, in the affairs of men, however few there are who merit them.

THE day following the report of Nevelle, Melvin, Urnsden, and the two gentlemen seen at the Inn, and subsequently at the dinner party, were noticed, at an early hour, entering the library; and in a few moments after a messenger was sent to, requesting the Misses Dierdoffe, and Ellen, and Susan to attend them.

Accustomed as they were to affection and obedience, but ignorant of the cause why sent for sooner than the usual hour, they had made a practice of daily being with Melvin in the library, the requirements of their parents were no sooner given, than preparations for compliance were made; and in a short time they were in the presence of those by whom they had been sent for.

On entering the room, and the usual etiquette of civility had passed between them, and the gentlemen present, Melvin requested the ladies to take the chairs, that had been placed at a table where he was seated on one, while Urnsden and the other gentlemen occupied others at the opposite side of the fire-place.

"Young ladies," said Melvin, as a pleasant smile denoted the effusions of a noble soul, "yesterday you spent the greater part of the day with those who, like yourselves, are in possession of youthful hearts, and

the workings of whose minds are untrammelled by the cares of life, nor a thought upon the future of experience. This, in its place, I am happy to see; and which, in the order of nature's divine Author, is peculiarly the province of youth. As the onward march of life and experience produces proofs of reality, the mind gradually assumes a different position for its axis; and though then far removed from the like sphere which is now being occupied by yourselves, can revert to the scenes of youth, and with pleasure there, have pass in review those of such times as are now yours. Such, I am happy to say, is the state of the minds of those in whose presence you now are. To recite some of my own and the acts of others, with whom I was concerned, is my present purpose, and with that view you have been sent for to lend me your attentions, in common with the gentlemen present, while I am disclosing things heretofore purposely kept from you, until your minds should have become sufficiently mature to receive them. That time has arrived, and it is now that I ask of you your attention."

Here, Melvin went to his bureau, and unlocking, took from it an ebony box of neat workmanship, about ten square and eight inches in depth, and returning to his seat placed the box upon the table, with one hand resting upon it, and again addressing himself to the ladies said: "You look upon this article, as I presume, with some degree of surprise, and an appearance of intense thought; and well you may, for ere I have done with it, and the events attached to it, an agreeable as happy and profitable result will be the consequence; giving to those, whom

its contents concern, a new era in the future of their lives, heretofore unknown, and by no means ever thought of by them.

"Ever the friend, since the period of manhood commenced its course upon me, of the distressed and unfortunate in want, and especially in cases where the weaker portion of the master-piece of creation is concerned, I with one other, whose feelings are still congenial with my own, engaged in an enterprise resulting more fortunately than either of us could have then entertained an idea of, and of which I was fully apprized the year I became a married man.

"In the affair alluded to, it became necessary with a view to its accomplishment, to assume different names to those of our real ones; and my friend took upon himself that of 'Urnsden,' and I, that of '*Melvin;*' both now familiar ones to you, and which Mr. Dierdoffe and myself have adopted in the circumstances transpiring relative to two of you. In the latter instance those names have been resorted to consequent upon the success attending their adoption with me in former and long passed days.

"At that time, and on the edge of a small village in a State renowned for the name of Tory, there lived a poor man having a wife and four small children. Near it, and under orders from a distinguished partisan of the Revolution, a small party of young men, (of whom I had the honor of being one) was stationed for the purpose of watching the movements of a party of the class of gentry just spoken of.

"It was the fortune of our party to live in the family of a sterling friend to the liberty and independence of his country, and withal, a wealthy one; so

that, in truth, the prevailing opinion was, that the fine young men residing with him were relations of his, and excited no more observation among the disaffected, by whom he was surrounded, than the sneering remark of, 'What can one poor devil of an enemy to his Majesty do, when surrounded by such friends to 'King Gorge' as we are.'

"That kind of doctrine was of much service to the gentlemen and to our party, and profiting by it, our plans were securely laid, and our operations, deeply executed, were severely felt without the smallest suspicion being attached to us.

"One day, being in company with my friend, at a poor excuse for a 'tavern,' in the village, we happened to be near two men, who in listening to, without the appearance of doing so, we heard one say to the other:

"'Tom, it is our time now to make a haul, and if we are cunning we can do so very easy.'

"'What do you mean?' asked his companion.

"'I mean,' returned the other, 'that the rest of the boys in our company of His "Majesty's" scouting subjects have, in their routes against the "rebels," robbed them of many a bright guinea, and as they have done so, I see no harm in our following their example; and as I said just now, if we are not found out in it, can just as well pocket the nice sum of two thousand five hundred pounds each.'

"'Indeed!' replied Tom, with a grin of willing approval, 'then I agree with you;' but, he continued, 'as you have not told me, I must ask, how that is to be done?'

"'Why,' replied the other, 'the old man that lives

at the edge of the village, in the little log cabin, has fallen sole heir to the estate of an old fellow who thought he had played "rebel" long enough, and who made a die of it some six months ago. I have seen a copy of his will, and have gone so far in the promotion of our plan, as to propose to the old man in the cabin, who is illiterate, (another item in our favor) to act as his attorney in getting his fortune, which the will says is "cash," and deposited in bank. And,' continued the wiseacre, 'all we have to do now is, to become his agents, get possession of his papers, prepare a false demise drawn in the forcible appearance of reality in our favor, and then by a slow process of unperceived doses of poison to take his, and the lives of his family. You,' continued the speaker, 'are more conversant with business than I am, and if you will join me, we will share the spoils of this easy and sure mode of getting a good start in the world.'

"Their plan was then matured; and the next day was the time set to visit the old man, and put into effect their villanous designs. My friend and I became incensed at such demon-like spirits, as could devise so cool and deliberate a plan of outrage, and determined to put a stop to it or die in the attempt to do so. Accordingly we watched their movements of that day, and in a few hours after, had the satisfaction to learn that they were ordered upon a scouting excursion by their leader (as he was termed) to return the next morning.

"It was now our time, and that evening strangers as we were to him, we went to the residence of the old man; told him of what had been overheard by us, and offered our services in his and his family's pro-

tection and defence. Himself and his wife, seemed to feel, as was shown in their every act, the deepest sense of gratitude; and soon we were recognized by them as the champions of a bloody as fatal tragedy to part of their family.

"The necessary precautions of who were (and, indeed, remaining unknown in that section of country) the old man's friends in the affair were attended to. And there is but one man living who knows that my friend and myself had anything to do in the transaction; and he was a young 'Attorney at Law,' at that time, belonging to our company, and who I had got to write the old man's will, preparatory to any fatal event that might happen to him.

"Having been made his executor, I took possession of his papers, and leaving in their stead, and in the place from whence the old man, had in the presence of his intended assassin taken them the preceding day, a like bundle neatly tied, we left his house; and did so, with an understanding that we would return to it the next day, and lay concealed near there, to watch the manœuvres of the old man's Tory acqaintance and his accomplice.

"Upon the following day we were disguised and properly armed, and at an early hour took our station in a thicket of bushes that stood a short distance from the old man's cabin, from whence we had a clear view of the village, and all who passed to and from it.

"The sun had nearly set when we began to think that the Tories had abandoned their plan, at least for that time; but as twilight grew dim we discovered two men bending their course toward the house. They being yet at some distance off, and that moment

the old man coming to us, (doubtless from his anxiety for safety), we entered the house with him, taking a position in the rear of a plank partition.

"Soon after the arrival of the disciple of the renowned Iscariot, he renewed the proposals he had made to the old man the day before; adding, that he had brought his friend with him, who was well versed in the law, who would render him every assistance in obtaining ample justice, and charging no more for all, than the usual fee in such cases. And in order to a speedy obtaining of his legacy, that it was only necessary for him to sign that night a document that they had brought with them. After some conversation upon the subject, the old man thanked him for the interest himself and his companion had taken, and said: 'that he believed he would decline doing anything, for the present in the matter. That he knew his money safe where it then was, that himself and his wife were not, at that time in want of it; and that he designed the fortune that had been left him, for his young and helpless children, when they should have become men and women.'

"At that our Mentor of the day before, coolly, and with an air of much assumed consequence, replied: 'Old man, we did not come here to-night for the purpose of hearing expressions of gratitude, nor to receive flattering compliments, but to have you do what is required, leaving the result to our own mode of future friendship. If that is not done, then to compel you to a compliance with our proposition, even at the expense of the lives of yourself, your wife and your children. One half hour,' he continued, 'by the watch (which he held in his hand) will be given to determine

upon, of what you will do; and in the meantime I shall see if things are in the same place I saw them put yesterday.' Thus saying the speaker rose from his seat, and stepping to the bed upon which the little children were lying in a profound sleep, took from between the feather and straw beds, a package of papers, as he supposed, seen placed there the day before. 'This,' said he, 'is what we want, and if you will not let us have it in the way offered you, you are out of the reach of assistance, and must die to-night.' Still by the bed-side, where he had just discovered the children, and the half hour having expired, in a few minutes, and showing a vial then in his hand, he said: 'Do you see this little weapon? It has just given permission to your children to enjoy a longer sleep, and the next objects to which we shall turn our attention, is to tie both of you together, by ropes prepared for that purpose, and leaving you so, go away by the light afforded from the burning of your house.'

"Here a different course took place from the one intended by that deliberation; and, before I proceed further, it is necessary here to state, that the fourth child (a girl) would have met a like fate in the tragical parts of the scenes of that night had it have been at the head instead of at the foot of the bed, where it escaped the notice of the assassin.

"That mode of taking the lives of the children, was unexpected as unforeseen by either my friend or myself, and the manner of its perpetration, put the little sufferers beyond the reach of our protection. Not so, however, with the old man, his wife and the remaining child, which, at that time awoke from its slumber. They were seized upon by the fiends;

but that act by them, was the signal of their destruction; for, in the next moment, my friend had one, and I the other by their throats with one hand, while in the other was held our drawn daggers.

"As they had committed murder silently, it was our object to revenge the wrong in like manner. But our enemies had nearly forced a change of that intention, for he who was grappling with my friend, was in the act of drawing his pistol from a place in the breast of his coat, when, in the next instant, my friend perceiving it, the scoundrel fell dead at his feet. Here the wretch I had hold of begged for an extension of mercy, that was granted, and while in a pretence at confession, aimed a blow at me with his dagger, which was lodged in the arm of my friend. At that the villain received a wound, of which he died the next day, after a confession in reality of his, and the crimes of his accomplice. Adding, 'That he knew not by whom the justice of the retribution for them had been inflicted.'

"The scenes I have just told you of," continued Melvin, "had all taken place between dusk and the hour of ten on that night, and the remainder of it was occupied with a view to prevent suspicion resting upon us as being concerned in the rescue of the family. We remained with them until about three o'clock in the morning, when, giving instructions to the old man and his wife of how to act on the following day and subsequently, we left them; and on our way home divested ourselves of our dresses of disguise, and after consigning them to perpetual oblivion in a deep and sluggish stream close by, we regained our rooms without the knowledge of any,

save our long known, and then, as ever since, highly esteemed friend, the 'attorney at law.'

"The old man did as we had instructed him to do. The next day was one of excitement throughout the whole village, and soon the news of it reached our residence, where, upon hearing it, my partizan comrades and myself, and the gentlemen with whom we lived, repaired to the scene of murder.

"Just at our arrival there we found the old man and his wife (as three of us know they were) truly distressed at the loss of their children, and at this time going about expressing their wishes that some kind one would be their friend in the decent burial of their children.

"Passing through the crowd and watching for the sign which we told him would be upon the persons of my friend and me, by which he would know us from others, he came, presently, to where we were, and looking imploringly at us, said:

"Strangers, will you be the friends of two distressed parents and their only remaining child?'

"In a very little time the crowd was dense around the speaker and ourselves, and after some questions were put to the old man, and his answers returned, an assent was given to his request.

"Before the man died, as spoken of, the cause of the murders, and subsequent intention of the murderers, were made known, and in a few days after the old man made another will. He wished much to make the two known, to his and the rescue of his, wife and child from death, legatees, but we declined it upon the basis that our compensation was already had, in the pleasure we felt in the service rendered him.

"A few months after that event a separation of my two friends and myself took place. One, for parts unknown; myself, as a commissioned officer in the army of the Revolution—and the attorney to follow his profession. The latter I left my agent, and among other duties left in his care, one was, to see to and provide for, out of means always in the hands of my agent, all necessary comforts for the use of the old man, his wife and their child.

"The age of woman succeeded that of childhood and, in the meantime, death deprived her of her father and mother.

"About thirty years after the murders already spoken of, I met with my two friends. The one who had been with me in the village had accumulated a fortune, was married, but without children, and had adopted the fatherless and motherless ones of the old man's and woman's daughter, whose life we had saved when a child.

"Of the four children my friend had adopted, two died shortly after I first saw them. Having two girls only out of the four left, they become well raised, and every attention was bestowed upon them in their education by my friend.

"The other one of my friends had also married, and had, at the time now spoken of, a wife and two promising little boys. Misfortune, however, dealt severely with him, as he was then and is still poor.

"At the consent of my poor friend and his wife, the children were taken quite young from them, and have been raised and educated by a friend of theirs and of their parents. To this day, as a piece of eccentricity in theirs, and their father's and mother's

benefactor, those children, now grown, do not know who their father and mother are.

"Both of the children, from particular traits discovered in their childhood, bore different names from those of their real ones; and to this day are accosted by no other, nor are they in possession of the least intimation of any other being theirs. But the time," continued Melvin, "for them to know their real names, and whose sons they are, as also those of the young ladies, of whose daughters they are, is, in both instances, not far distant.

"I have now," he continued, "given you an account of events that a short sequel will cast a stronger light upon, and will, I hope, in its development, not fail in affording an agreeable surprise in the minds of those to whom I have told part only of the events of my life."

Here Melvin took a small key from his vest pocket, with which he unlocked the box before him, and taking from it a bundle of papers, from that he took and read to the ladies and gentlemen, the following letter.

"*Fotheringay, Virginia, Sept.* 15, 1785.

"To my only child, Leontine, and beloved niece, Antoniette.

"DEAR CHILDREN,—At a remote period from the present this letter is designed for your sight and perusal when mature age shall have become yours, and when you can properly understand and appreciate its contents, and the motives governing its author.

"Ere the privilege of seeing this is yours, a development of circumstances by one, whom, doubtless, you

love, and who, unquestionably, in his every thought and act reciprocates the feeling, will have been made known to you and to others they concern.

"Knowing the intentions of him, by whom this will be shown you, and thoroughly conversant with the power and extent of his eccentric, it is true, yet humane and benevolent disposition, together with the purposes he has had, and continues to have in view to effect, it is only necessary on this occasion to add, that the two young ladies with whom you have been and are still on terms of intimate friendship as the Misses Dierdoffe, are in reality not so. Nor are the two young gentlemen, now your intimate acquaintances, in possession of the knowledge of whom they themselves are; but on the contrary, are under names not assumed by them, but given them by another, and are both, as yet, ignorant of why it is so.

"The Misses Dierdoffe (so called) are the grandchildren of an unfortunate old man and woman, whose ill-fated history you will, ere this time, have learned something of. The parents of those children were worthy people, and highly respected by all who knew them. Their name was 'Thurmond," and for the acquirement of intellectual endowment of their now, only surviving daughters, and parental affection and care extended over them by Mr. and Mrs. Dierdoffe much credit is due.

"Of the young men (twin brothers) now in our family, their names are 'Thomas' and 'Edmund Miller,' sons of the intelligent attorney, but now poor man, whose generosity and kindness were, in years past, associated with others in the detection and overthrow of villany.

"With a view of cementing the friendship which I hope still exists between you and others of whom I have spoken, I have had made, and which you will receive herewith, four keepsakes, alike in every particular; two for yourselves, the others to be placed by each one of you upon the fingers of the Misses Thurmund.

"This I have written, lest I may never have the pleasure of seeing my wishes in that particular carried into effect; and all I shall further add is, that I trust the Supreme Architect of heaven and earth will, as he has ever done, continue his decree, that 'Virtue, though often depressed, shall continue to have its reward!'

"I need not give you further proof, of what you both know well, that,

"I am,

"Yours truly,

"JAMES WITHROW."

During the recital of Melvin, and the reading of the letter which followed it, each one of the ladies exhibited a countenance betokening much mental excitement, and for some minutes after the name of its author had been pronounced a profound silence was observed by all present.

A knowledge of whom they really were; a sense of gratitude felt towards those by whose kindness they had arrived at what they then were; the obligations they felt themselves under to the indirect though chief cause of all of it, and how best to show in the future a gratitude acceptable, brought to the eyes of the

Misses Dierdoffe that bright and significant talisman of woman's heart—a tear.

Of those who were gone they knew nothing save what they had just heard through two unquestionably correct sources. But for those upon whom they had so long been accustomed to look in the affectionate light of father and mother, and at an unexpected moment to know the reverse, much of that purity of affection with which woman alone is peculiarly endowed, was felt as expressed upon the occasion; nor was the regard with which they viewed Melvin, overlooked.

Time, with its associate envelope of circumstance, often presents to the mind things pleasant and things painful.

"In the present, with me and my sister," said the just before Miss Dierdoffe, but now Miss Julia Thurmond, "there is a feeling of both pleasure and pain. The latter, because of the death of those who gave to us life; and the former, because of the means afforded us to sustain it."

At that, she took hold of the hand of her sister Eliza, and both advancing to where Melvin was, she continued:

"To your kindness and benevolence, and that at the risk of your own life, we are indebted for having had a mother; that mother's children are now before you, to tender in her name, and that of their own, our grateful thanks."

Here, kneeling before him, and each taking a hand of Melvin in their's, and imprinting a kiss upon them, Jane said:

"Ingratitude, kind sir, is the most base of all

crimes, and were we, on this momentous occasion, to us, remiss in feeling and showing its opposite, we should be no longer worthy of that noble deportment with which your past life has been marked towards us. In this humble attitude, therefore, receive a renewal of our obligations to respect and esteem you."

As the ladies rose from their position before Melvin, and were advancing to where Dierdoffe was seated, Mrs. Dierdoffe and Mrs. Melvin entered the library, accompanied by "Dispatch" and "Rightquick."

"At no moment of our lives," continued Jane, as they both threw their arms around the person of Mrs. Dierdoffe, "were we ever happier in seeing you than in the present one, since it affords to myself and Eliza an opportunity of renewing our pledge of affection and obedience. Foundlings, in one sense of the word, at an early age, we were, from a decree of the *All Wise*, thrown upon the cold charities of a *merciless world*, to live, if at all, amid the sneers and indignities too often, as fatally, levelled at our sex by the 'lords of creation.' From all that you have saved us; and from the hour you became the protective mother of the orphans, now present, one continued belief possessed us, that it was you that gave us birth, and upon whom, in every sense of the word, we have looked, honored and obeyed, in the conviction, with us, of a beloved mother."

Here the Misses Thurmond took, each, a hand of their supposed mother, and led her to a seat by the side of Dierdoffe, when Jane, resuming her remarks, said:

"Those who ought to be first in the esteem of

children, are their mothers, and next their fathers; therefore do not blame us for the preference you have witnessed, since it detracts nothing from the honor in which you are held. The events of this have afforded to my sister and myself a knowledge of whose we are; but never having the pleasure of seeing our real ones, we are, as we could have ever been, of the belief that your own children would not have been more kindly treated than we are by our adopted father."

Thus saying, the young ladies embraced Dierdoffe, and after imprinting a kiss upon his and those of the lips of his wife, both seated themselves near the chairs then occupied by Mrs. Melvin and the young men."

Ignorant of what had been, and was still passing in the library, "Dispatch" and "Rightquick" sat in silent astonishment and wonder at occurrences so unusual and entirely new to them; and after a short interval of profound silence by all in the room, Melvin addressing himself to the young men, said:

"Judging from the appearance of surprise that your countenances indicate, you are doubtless in ignorance of what has taken place in the library this morning. It is my duty, among other things I shall call your attention to on this occasion, to tell you that that ignorance has been purposely intended by me until the present hour; not, however, from any disrespect to, or want of confidence in you, on my own, or on the part of any in this room.

"You have been nurtured and raised by me from your early childhood, without a knowledge of your parents, or of whose offspring you are. In your

present estate of maturity, and preparation by education, good sense and gentlemanly deportment, to commence your parts upon the expansive stage of life, you may be somewhat disposed to think me illiberal, and perhaps unjust, in not having informed you, ere now, of whose sons you are. Be this as it may, I have had my own motives for it, and which, I think, in the sequel you will not censure me for.

"There is no necessity for me," continued Melvin, "to make many more remarks upon this subject, as he whose you are, will shortly confirm what I have said. You have lived in my family long enough to know me, and one other, who, with myself, has bestowed upon you parental care. And, as in the case of which you are both apprized, and are, in fact, both actors, you know me eccentric; so, in like manner, I have been with regard to you."

Here Melvin handed the letter, already known to my readers, to Dispatch, saying, "Both of you read that, and then tell me, if you know from it 'Who is your father?'"

Another period of profound silence was observed throughout the room while the young were engaged reading the letter. That done, Dispatch folding and returning it to Melvin, replied:

"When such a man as the author of that letter was, speaks of my brother and myself, and others, whom it concerns, it is done knowingly and for the best of motives; and you, sir, to corroborate the statement, makes it doubly imperative upon all concerned to receive it. Taught to obey, to honor and to respect you, we have experienced in you, and that lady (pointing to Mrs. Melvin) a father's and a

mother's care. Knowing no other till now, in that light, our entire object has been to deserve in order to merit your regard. Our position must now be changed. In it no digression shall ever be known in our deportment towards you or yours; while our next care shall be to hail him who is our father with that affection becoming dutiful and obedient sons."

Then, fixing their eyes upon Miller, the two brothers advanced to where he was, and each taking a hand of the old gentleman in theirs, Dispatch again said: "Receive, sir, an assurance of the happiness we feel in knowing you to be our father; and the determined intent on our parts to love, to honor, to protect, and to cherish you, in your now advanced age and decline of life."

For some time a general fund of social as interesting conversation followed the assertion of his two sons; when, in reply to a remark from Miller, Melvin, giving to the company a well-known signal, all was again silent, and every eye turned upon him who gave it; when Melvin, addressing himself to the Misses Thurmond, said:

"In this box is a copy of the will of your father, which you can see at any time. By it, and the care I have taken of what it speaks of, you will be each in possession of a handsome estate, and that in the legal currency of your country."

Then turning to Ellen and Susan, he continued: "There is one thing more remaining for your action;" at that, Melvin handed to each of them a small casket, saying: "Do with their contents what you have been directed." And in a few moments after, four ele-

gantly finished as massive diamond rings, were seen on the middle fingers of the left hand of the, then, as before and ever after, four friends.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Hope is the companion of desire; and desire the incentive to action.

THE recital in the library by Melvin to the respective parties concerned, had presented to the minds of some present new ideas, predicated upon former events; and, as with Ellen and Susan, so it was with Jane and Eliza, to settle upon and adopt such a course in the future as would most conduce to their happiness. In that particular, the last mentioned ladies had had proposals of long standing by the now known Thomas and Edmund Miller. The former had asked for the heart and hand of Jane—the latter that of a like bestowal from Eliza Thurmond.

The increase of wealth, on the one hand, and the continued appearance of poverty on the other, with the conviction that they had now not only his sister (wife of Mr. Murdoch, the other stranger spoken of,) to contribute to the support of, but an aged father to maintain, created an impression on the minds of the young men, that, in that quarter, such hopes were no longer to be retained.

Here I shall leave for the present the subject of the new parties brought before you, and ask, as hereto-

fore, your permission, reader, to go with the ladies and gentlemen in question, elsewhere.

It is a rare occurrence, in the affairs of love, that invitations given to those under its influence are ever wantonly neglected.

The last account we have had of Laurence and Hyne, was that they were rather unsocial, yet systematic in the arrangement of time with them; and, from appearances, suspicions of their sage friend, Standly.

The first law of nature, self-defence, had become an essential with them; and, for that purpose, whenever Standly was absent, and engaged, as he had been seen frequently to be, with Melvin, Urnsden, Miller, and Murdoch, they would speak of and mature their future plan of proceeding.

One snowy morning, and a few days subsequent to the recent occurrences in the library, the two young gentlemen were discovered to be more genteelly dressed than had been usual with them; and while at breakfast, and in the presence of Melvin and Standly, Laurence gave to Sanco a sealed note, with instructions for it to be delivered that morning to Mrs. Urnsden, with a reply returned.

The contents of the note were as follows:—

"*Mountain Inn*, 8 *o'clock A. M., Jan.* 10*th*, 1802.

"MADAM—

"The civilities shown to the strangers whose names are hereunto attached, are among the many incidents of kindness extended by yours to that of our sex.

"Here, alone, and far from that circle of society to which we have been accustomed, we are desirous (if

agreeable) of paying our respects, in person, this morning, to the ladies of Mr. Urnsden's family.

"Very respectfully,

"GEORGE LAURENCE,
"SAMUEL HYNE.

"To Mrs. Urnsden."

"Something is afloat," said Melvin to Standly, as the young men left the room. "We must see to it, and whatever it may be, it must pass our inspection before it effects what it is intended for."

Just as Melvin had finished his remark, Sanco was passing through the dining-room, on his way to execute the order received.

"Let me see the direction of that note, Sanco," said Melvin." Upon looking at it for a moment, with an appearance of intense thought, and returning the note to the servant, Melvin continued, "It is all right; Edmund and Thomas are there. Now let us go into your room and wait the issue of the reply." They did so; and in the next half hour Sanco returned.

"Well, Sanco," said Laurence, "what news have you?"

"This note," handing it as he spoke, "will tell you, sir," replied Sanco.

Not a word had passed between either of the gentlemen after Standly and Melvin had entered the room; and Laurence opening the note, he and Hyne read to themselves, the following reply to theirs.

"*Mansion, Tuesday, 9 o'clock, A. M., Jan.* 10, 1802.

"GENTLEMEN,—Your polite note of this inst., to Mrs. Urnsden, I have been directed to answer, and that in

accordance with my own, and feelings of others of your recent acquaintances here.

"You speak of loneliness, and a want of that circle of society, now far from you, in which you have been accustomed to move. Of the kindness, in general, extended to yours, by that of our sex, and particularly of the civilities shown to you by *us* at this 'house.' Here you are complimentary; but no more so, it is believed, than you are earnest in the statement of.

"If you think the society among these mountains, and particularly, that the members of this family can contribute to your amusement, your pleasure, or your happiness, the doors of the 'Urnsden Mansion' will ever be open to receive you; and as an earnest of what is here written by the *deaf* and *dumb*, we will expect you to dine with us to-day.

"Respectfully,

"ELLEN."

"To Messrs. Laurence and Hyne, Mountain Inn."

Having in their possession a guarantee of their welcomed appearance at the "mansion," Laurence and Hyne, were, in the next moment, putting on their cloaks for departure, when Standly said to them: "where are you going such weather as this?"

"In pursuit of that which concerns us alone, and without the least regard to the advice or opinions of any who have, or may ask any questions of us about our movements," replied Laurence. Here giving Standly a reproachful look, they were out of their room, and on their way to the "mansion."

Their reception at the mansion, on that occasion, was marked by a course of politeness and civility,

bordering upon a sort of sociability peculiar to that practiced among long known friends.

As Melvin had before said, "Edmund and Thomas Miller were there," and from whom such an observance of attention was shown as to greatly facilitate the, then, intentions of Laurence and Hyne. For each one of the four gentlemen having particular objects in view, they were by no means in the way of each other. And, here it is only necessary to add, that each having his own business to attend to, my lady and gentlemen readers can, from similar experience, infer what it was. "Why," I think I hear you say, "a declaration of love by our Eastern friends—and a prosecution of former proposals, by the two young Millers." You are right my readers, and I shall do you the credit to say: "you have guessed well!"

The taken for natural impediments of Ellen and Jane were well guarded by them; while with a graceful ease of manners and suavity of countenance peculiarly theirs, the hours of that day passed in an uninterrupted round of pleasure. At the dinner hour, Urnsden was more the gentleman than heretofore shown, and ere the sun had withdrawn his light from the horizon, our travellers had ceased to think upon the loss of pleasure found in the circles of eastern society, and thought themselves particularly happy in the rays reflected upon them from western lights.

It was not with Laurence and Hyne as it was with the young Millers; for, upon that day, their cases were decided by the fair judges before whom they had long since preferred their claims.

The works of Melvin had arrived at the crisis desired. His renowned forethought upon the principles of

philanthropy and benevolence had, thus far, terminatd as wished for and intended. And the virtuous sons of the learned, the worthy, yet poor attorney, were to be the husbands of the Misses Thurmund.

Towards evening of that day, a cold north wind had begun its course through the mountains, and over a deep snow that had fallen the previous night.

After tea, Jane and Eliza were reminded of their promise given at the dinner already noticed; and in a few moments after, Jane was seated at the piano-forte.

At that time Boreas had become more than usually boisterous without, and the shrill whistle of his sub-ordinates, that were heard as they passed around the cornice of the "Mansion," brought to the recollection of the ladies an event heretofore spoken of.

Then, turning over some leaves of a music book before her, and at the time giving a side glance to Ellen and Susan, then standing with Laurence and Hyne in the group, Jane requested her sister to accompany her on the guitar, and Edmund to assist them on the piano.

All present, except our travellers, understood the course of that move and soon the "Wind of the Winter Night," was again sung and played.

Much of that kind of composure and pleasant look, usual upon the countenance in things pleasing in the retrospect and present, was plainly perceivable in Laurence and Hyne, during the performance. And when through with, a simultaneous as courteous tender of their thanks for the favor as unexpected, as unlooked for offered them, with which to recall pleasant

reminisences were instantly given to the young ladies and to Miller.

A like round of the social and agreeable in rapid succession upon various topics ensued during the remainder of the evening; and at near twelve o'clock our young travellers retraced their steps towards the Mountain Inn.

All was stillness there, and no one was yet up—save the, though obsequious Sanco—who as soon as the young gentlemen entered their room, said:—

"Young masters, I knew you were out seeing the young ladies at the mansion—and thinking that—though you have warm hearts—your feet might be cold when you came in, for that reason I have kept a large fire burning, and your room warm."

"You have been quite considerate, Sanco," replied Laurence, "and before we leave the mountains, we will reward you for your attentions upon us."

"All will be right with you, young masters, before then," replied Sanco, smiling, as he spoke. Then getting a boot-jack, and drawing off their boots, he continued:—

"Pleasant dreams attend you, my masters."

Before a reply could be made to his last remark, Sanco had left their room, closing the door after him.

"I wonder what that fellow can mean by his frequent inuendo expressions?" said Laurence.

"Whatever it may be, he is as precautious and guarded in them as old Melvin is mysterious in his movements, aided by that singular genius, Urnsden," replied Hyne.

"It appears to me," resumed Laurence, "to be out of the order of refinement and taste, such as we have

witnessed to-day, that such animals as those two men are, should have raised children possessing the refinement found in the young ladies of that house."

"So much the better for us," replied Hyne, "for, if we should be fortunate in the success of our declarations of to-day, we will return to New York in possession of a display of refinement, beauty and manners, inferior to none in that or any other city."

"ENTIRELY TAMED, AND SUBMISSIVE NOW," said Standly, turning over in his bed, and where he was supposed to have been in a profound sleep. To his remarks, the young men made no reply: making *silence* the confession of judgment, and thereby ratifying the truth of what Standly had said; and in a few moments they retired to bed, where Morpheus long hesitated to supply them with an attendant.

CHAPTER XXXV.

When the mind is most at rest, then it is that we are most happy in the affairs of life; and it is only in the reverse of all that, that proves whether we are or are not men.

HAVING launched their mental bark of hope upon the calm surface of the (as it were) sea of expectation, our young travellers were easy for the time being.

Answers to the preferment of their suits were suspended, for want of further consideration upon (as the ladies expressed it) a subject too newly for their immediate decision. Hence the gentlemen thought of nothing, and spoke of nothing, but what love, in

its variety of pleasures, presents to the mind. My readers, of both sexes, know what they are, and that truth saves me the time as well as space necessary in the description of them.

Whole days, and frequently half of almost every night were spent at the mansion; so that, in fact, few if any preventives to conference were thrown between Standly and his favorite companions of the confederacy.

Melvin, Urnsden, Miller and Murdock were those with whom the latter traveller from the East spent the chief portion of his time, while the junior two of the three, were, if not with the ladies, passing their time at their favorite project (though unknown to) for the inspection and acceptance of the ladies—a miniature painting of each.

However communicative against, and treacherous Standly might appear to his young friends, he had kept inviolate the knowledge of their purpose; and from the hour the ladies had been first seen, on the morning of the deer hunt, till then, no intimation, let alone a disclosure, had been given relative to the miniatures, a knowledge of which for the first time is brought before us.

Acute observation, and memory in its entire strength, where the only means at that time, within the reach of Laurence and Hyne, by which to assist their mind's ocular in placing upon ivory, with an ease of resemblance to life itself, those by whom they were (using the words of Standly) "caught at last," and towards whom, in behalf of themselves and other gentlemen overly vain in self-esteem, they had already began, as is plainly seen, "a recantation."

No word, no act, or no obstruction of any kind whatever, were known as intruders upon the pleasures that now surrounded our two friends. The centre of gravity to their every thought was now daily seen, and in the ways heretofore spoken of, conversed with by them.

In that course of allurement and delusion their hours and days passed, till nearly the period in which they had expressed a wish to know the final result of that to which they had aspired.

In their attention to the ladies nothing had remained undone, as they supposed, calculated to mar an answer favorable; and under such impressions the young gentlemen had twice adverted to their declaration.

Allied to one another by the strongest ties of friendship, and the sincerely wished for success of each, our young gentlemen had gone as far in the respective spheres of familiar, yet profoundly respectful interviews, had with the ladies, upon the known intentions of both, as to exercise no secrecy with regard to their movements. So that, in fact, whatever one knew the other was then, or soon after apprized of.

The reasons for that course were predicated upon the fact that frequently in their interviews with the ladies, and the manner in which they were compelled to convey their ideas, recourse was had to the note-books already spoken of. So that, in that particular, differing materially from the practice of both sexes, endowed with the faculties of speech, with the privilege of *using them;* their respective courtships were conducted in a sort of harmony and mutual confidence

not very often, if at all, practised in the present day, by any who may read the account of so singular a courtship as was that now being described.

To the proposed mode of procedure the ladies assented, and in that state of affairs, our two friends had began to think all was as they thought it should be.

> Their hopes in love went on,
> Ever pure, as begun;
> From early dawn to setting sun,
> Till each two in four, were one.

Even so, reader! and had their, then, condition have been similar with either one or more of you, doubtless it would have had, and has now (for aught I know) a like appearance in your estimation. But the time is not yet at hand when those pleasant and wished for events may be brought about (if ever) between the heroines and heroes of the work now in your hands.

It has been said, on a former occasion, in this attempt to amuse you, and by a lady whose good sense was derived from reading, observation and experience, commenting upon matters such as are now before you (Mrs. Rayford). "That a reciprocal feeling of love and duty is a republic in miniature." If this be true, which I shall leave to the opinions of those who have, or may hereafter become practitioners in such matters, I shall here only add, that Laurence and Hyne were each laboring hard to establish a similar government, and that, ere long, we shall see how their efforts terminated, so far, at least, as their individual interests were concerned.

If love should continue as first represented,
What a mass of misfortune would be removed;
And thousands be ever contented
In the choice they had made of their love.

I have often wondered at the discords to which the lines just penned have reference, and regret to say, that, even the gentlemen now before us in their "love's young dream," were tinctured with a want of confidence in those who they were at that time I am speaking of, so desirous of making their own.

Jealousy, that bane to every source of true happiness, and fatal destroyer of every gem of woman's affection lay lurking in the, as yet, smooth and pleasant pathway of our young gentlemen.

The day previous to that one on which a refusal or acceptance of the offers made them were to be made known in adverting to the subject—the ladies claimed the right of interrogation; and, that the questions put and answers returned to them, should be unequivocating and definite. To be transcribed from the note-books into two others prepared for that purpose, and that the parties to each respective agreement, in the event of a promise of marriage, should sign their names thereto, to be kept as a memento and guide to their deportment toward one another in future years.

To the proposal of the ladies, the gentlemen replied, "that as the events of the following day would be momentous to them, they desired to defer their assent to, or refusal of the plan proposed, till the next morning."

The proposition of the gentlemen was agreed to, and soon after an adjournment ensued, to meet the

next day at nine o'clock, A. M., in (where the young travellers had never as yet been) the library.

"Those ladies entertain a high sense of the importance of the obligation, and the necessity there is in their opinion, of keeping inviolate the promise and pledge of marriage in the exercise of love and constancy," said Laurence, as they were on their return to the Inn—"and," continued he, "how shall we act in that part of their opinions referred to, and awaiting our answer?"

"I know of no other better plan to arrive at what we should do, than to refer the whole matter to the opinion and judgment of Mr. Standly," replied Hyne.

"Ah, true enough, but what if he is, as we have thought him to be,—treacherous—how then?" replied the other.

"Why then we can solve him—and if he is so,—can trust him no further," replied Hyne.

Of one opinion, and having agreed upon their purpose, the two friends shortly after arrived at the Inn.

For several days before the one present, the young gentleman had been upon their high horses, or in other words, indifferent and rather disrespectful towards Standly. An occurrence too often and shamefully the case in youth towards their seniors in age and experience. But of that they had thought better, and at their earliest opportunity disclosed the subject of which they had been speaking to him. Standly listened with attention to the disclosure of the position in which they were placed. At the end of their remarks upon it, one said, "What, sir, were it your case, as it is ours, would you do? and what would you advise us to do?"

"Gentlemen," replied Standly, "the *Most High* can

not *err*, and among the *invaluable* of his gifts to man are those of the *virtuous fair* of creation. They are those, to whom the love and practice of that intrinsic GEM, insures respect, and from whom a reflection of dignity emanates, that ever keeps man in his proper bounds."

"Were I in your places and desirous of a wife, what I have just said would be my first object; the next would be INTELLIGENCE, for where it exists there is a guarantee of DISCRETION, *it* leads to CALMNESS; CALMNESS to RESPECT; RESPECT to love and to DUTY, and duty to an accumulation and continuance of HAPPINESS, braced by an united exertion of the parties concerned to maintain such alliances. WEALTH," continued Standly, "is an ENTIRELY *incidental appendage;* not necessary to TRUE HAPPINESS, but a convenience thereto; which when properly used adds *comfort*, and to the reverse—A CURSE.

"What I have said is applicable to both sexes—The ladies of whom you have spoken, are, from what I can hear, possessed of the qualities to which your attention has been drawn, and," continued he, "they will not, I presume, exact any thing more from you than a high sense of the importance attached to marriage (should they accept your offers) warrants them in requiring."

The graphic as laconic remarks of Standly were properly understood and appreciated by his young companions; and the next day at the appointed hour they were at the "*mansion.*"

In a few minutes after they had entered the parlor, a servant conducted them to the library, saying, "Gentlemen, the ladies directed me to inform you that they would be in the library in a few moments.

The first object that attracted the attention of Laurence and Hyne there, was an old man, shabbily dressed, and exhibiting a countenance expressive of sorrow; and an eye, that at one time had been the talisman of a well-balanced, but then, wrecked and ruined intellect. He was seated at the table upon which had been placed pens, ink, and paper. Here he held in one hand a volume of the "British Classics," while with the other he was turning over and looking intently as he did so, at the spots on each one of the cards, that lay in a deck upon a table, and within his reach.

The gentlemen had scarcely taken seats, before the objects of their wishes entered the apartment.

Presenting to the gentlemen their note books, upon a leaf of which was contained the usual etiquette of the morning: it was promptly returned, and soon after, the business of the day before was resumed.

In reply to a few remarks having reference and leading to the purpose intended; the right of interrogation was ceded to the ladies. Whereupon they presented their note-books,—one to each of the gentlemen, for his perusal. Each book contained its exact copy of the other; and the language, style, and contents of them were as follows:

"The importance attached to marriage, and the consequences resulting from it, are obligations so little thought of by many who become so, that if ever such a position is my estate, him to whom I may become a wife must, before that event takes place, and where self-government in my sex terminates, answer with that sincerity and truth similar in their weight of influence to his opinions entertained of me, as his

desired companion for life, the following interrogatories:

"1st. Do you believe in a Supremacy and first cause as the Divine Author of all things?

"2d. Do you believe in love, adoration, accountability and obedience to that Supremacy?

"3d. Do you believe intelligence, virtue, love, constancy and a deference to the opinions of each in parents, indispensable requisites to keep firm and unchanged the alliance of marriage?

"4th. Is jealousy a predominant feature of your nature, and if so, have you self-possession and coolness of deliberation sufficient to attempt the immediate check to its incentive, and even then to reluctantly, if at all, become its convert?

"5. Are you vain in self opinion? and if so, have you carried it into such extremes as to have thought my sex inferior to yours, by any undue as ungentlemanly remarks of, or relative to them?

"6th. Are you of the belief that temperance, industry and economy, are necessary to happiness in married life? and if so, will you sustain such belief by a moderate use of the 'good things,' of life—thereby supporting the dignity of a gentleman, title of husband, honor of father, and the pleasure of being, so far as it may be in your power, without detriment to yourself and family, the friend of the unfortunate, in distress; judging your fellow beings more from internal than external appearances?

"7th. Are your inclinations such as to induce a preference of *home* to that an abroad?

"8. Could you place a firm reliance upon the word of your wife; and if so, not trammel her to restraint,

but rely upon the correctness of her judgment and actions in the occurrences incident to life?

"9. Could you be slow to anger, and if necessary to be shown, qualify it by that sort of rebuke peculiar to the sensible man, affectionate husband, and kind father?

"10th. Is your intellect so contracted, as in your views upon the works of Deity, to make disrespectful as ungentlemanly remarks of the personal defects of your fellow-beings?"

Much of that carefulness and attention shown in men upon affairs commanding strict notice was exhibited in reading the ten questions propounded for their consideration and reply to; and after reading them a second time, those for whose eye and conclusion they were intended, were for some time silent.

From the time the books had been presented to that of the end of the reflective mood produced in the minds of Laurence and Hyne, the ladies were occupied in a mere semblance at reading a couple of books they had taken up; which pretext for an earnest, they used as a kind of moving screen, propelled from the impulse of necessity; and watching the effect that written application upon further designs might have upon the minds of their lovers.

After about ten minutes spent in the way just spoken of, and for the first time done by either of them, Laurence and Hyne began a conversation between themselves, and in tones usual in ordinary speech, upon the now straight-lined condition of their favorite pursuit—matrimony—and what to do, in order to become possessed of the objects of their choice and preference.

At length they found themselves each of a like opinion and of a like sentiment, upon the questions proposed, and that, in them, they knew of no difficulty in passing an acceptance favorable to their desire, but in one solitary instance.

Here the gentlemen wrote to each lady on separate pieces of paper taken from the table the following alike notes, with the exception of the signatures attached.

"Your singular and justifiable requirements have been read and duly considered by me. They are expressive of your good sense and earnest judgment, and the importance with which you view the present as future of married estates; at the same time that they are, perhaps, unparalleled in any alliances between yours and my sex.

"With me there is but one thing in the entire of your requirements, that I fear will not pass your scrutiny of acceptance, and that is, the fifth number of your interrogatories.

"Of that offence it becomes me to plead guilty; to repent its absurdity, recant such ideas, for the future, applied to your sex; to ask a forgiveness of such offence from you, and in the bitter exercise and union of whatever amount of good sense I may be possessed of, claim the pleasure and happiness of calling and knowing you mine as long as we both shall live."

To each one of those notes the gentlemen affixed their names, and a little time subsequent to their presentment, two notes alike in contents and in answer to those already seen, were presented to the gentlemen, in language and style as follows:

"It is a source of much pleasure to me to see your

frank, open, and gentlemanly acknowledgment of error, and earnest with which you recant the further continuance of it.

"All are not alike in beauty and external appearances, and where this is apparent, there may be its equivalent among the homely featured of creation. And such, too, as the want of, are regretted as envied by the most beautiful.

"Doubtless you understand my meaning, and to what class of possessions I have reference—*a cultivated mind.* Its owner has an interior wealth, and the heart being as it should, there emanates from it rays of light ever brilliant till its last pulse bids to it an adieu.

"I shall be candid with you, as you have been with me; and in regard to that of which you speak doubtingly, know by this, and from me, that that of which you speak as an impassible barrier to your wishes, is thought of as such no longer; and that the repudiation of it, among other virtues I hope you possess, are the causes why I now consent to be yours till (using an idea derived from one of yours) life with me shall be no more."

That which may be thought singular in the estimation of my readers, the courtship and engagement of Laurence and Hyne to Ellen and Susan, was conducted and concluded as the two latter determined it should be. And now, under that engagement, and in that kind of humor towards one another that I think those who are so ought to be in, I shall go with them somewhere else, by your permission and indulgence.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Villany may be for a time triumphant; but, like the influence of sunbeams upon fog, dissolves into nonentity before integrity and honor.

SOMETIMES, when most flattered with renewed hope, we are most in danger; and that which appears brilliant as the noonday sun at his meridian height, is often turned into a sadness and gloom dark and dreary as the tempestuous midnight hour is to the wrecked mariner at sea, on the fragment of a shattered mast.

As is natural in such cases as those of which we have been speaking, and particularly in that mountainous country, where they knew but few, and among that few the objects of their now principal attention, our young travellers were oftener at the mansion than they would have probably been, could they have been aware of its consequences. But, as it is said, "love is blind," we may excuse Laurence for being thus attentive to his intended Ellen, and make a like allowance for Hyne in his devotions to his intended Susan.

"What say reader?" I think I hear you say "Yes;" and under that impression will proceed.

On one occasion, and not many days subsequent to their engagement and pledge of constancy, our gentlemen presented to their respective fair the miniatures spoken of. They had been taken in the costumes in which the originals were first beheld, and with regard

to resemblance of feature and expression, nothing, upon their presentation was considered wanting in the effect of a true likeness to each.

After a few moments spent by the ladies in looking intently at the paintings, and in a reply to a written question of "Will you keep this token of my affection for you till our arrival in New York, where I shall have it set as you direct?" the ladies severally said, "Upon your request rests a contingency; and be the reasons surprising and disagreeable as they may, I owe it to your candor, frankness, and undoubted esteem, to inform you of the difficulties with which I am surrounded; and of which, as yet you know nothing, and that may be the destruction of that hope entertained at becoming yours, in possession as I am in sentiment and in feelings."

The like expression from both ladies startled their admirers, and for some time they were mute as those in whose presence they were.

To the gentlemen—*Love* was threatened with a forced abdication; and his prime minister, *Hope*, seemed to have lost his imperial prerogative of administration; while in the present and in the distant was seen—Despair and all his retinue of mishaps waiting to assume the sovereignty of Disappointment.

The then impressive thought upon officiates of that thronged court instantly produced in the minds of the gentlemen a determined intent to inquiry; and, if possible, even with a risk of a loss of life, to surmount the difficulties—break down the barriers of opposition—and to take by force, if expedient, possession of those to whom they were now bound by every tie, save one, of matured affection. Hence the question put by

the gentlemen in the plural number, and to Ellen alone as speaker, in the language and spirit following:

"When will you honor us with the disclosure spoken of, allowing our course in the result and ready willingness to bear its consequences?"

"To-morrow, at ten o'clock in the morning, and in the library, where you will receive a written statement from me, and where Susan and I will attend you and Mr. Hyne."

In a little time after they had both read the reply of Ellen to Laurence, our young friends bid a respectful adieu to the ladies, and were, with little delay, in their apartment at the Inn.

A multiplicity of ideas, upon the past, present and the future, occupied the minds of our gentlemen, and each one, impressed with his own construction, give utterance thereto in a communication of opinions that had already occupied their time till near the tea hour of that evening.

They had not seen Standly since breakfast, where he appeared, formal, reserved and distant—directing almost the entire of his conversation to Melvin and several others at the table, who were strangers to Laurence and Hyne. Since Standly's recent advice to the two latter they had become shunned by him as much as it was possibly in his power to do, and even in ordinarily necessary interviews with his young friends was remarkable for an assumed air of dignity, unusual as unaccounted for by them.

The truth was, that the excitement he had created in the minds of the young men on all former occasions had necessarily to be fed at every opportunity, and the time approaching, in which his career was to

be an important one in the confederacy that evening and in their own room he accused the gentlemen of a want of confidence in him, alleging, as a proof of it, that they had come to him for advice, but had not reported the result of an important and late interview they had had with the ladies at the mansion.

In reply to his remarks, Laurence said: "So far, Mr. Standly, as respect for your person, and the esteem with which your association with us, as a companion, a friend, and an adviser, since our departure from home to the present hour are concerned, a retrospective view of my deportment toward you, as well as, I will venture to say, that of Sam has been, there is nothing to the contrary of what I have just asserted, of which you can possibly in truth accuse us. Not so, however, with you towards us; for since the hour we concluded to remain at this inn during the winter, a greater or less degree of singular if not strange deportment, has been the almost invariable course of your deportment toward us. What object you may have had for it we are in entire ignorance of; and upon what your mysterious movements, united with those of others around us, are based, we are alike too proud as too self-dependent, as conscious of having given no cause for it, though here alone, to ask of a something like a confederacy that is gathering around us. That you belong to it," said Laurence, "is beyond a shadow of a doubt; and be yours, and the object of those with whom you are associated, what it may, the future course of Sam and myself among these mountains, and amid the depth of winter that surrounds us, will be one equally reserved and mysterious as that of yours and others

have been to us. And," he continued, "I request you to understand, distinctly, that intercourse based upon friendship between you and us, from this hour ceases to exist. And know, also, Mr. Standly," continued Laurence, "that whenever it becomes necessary, by way of business or incidental casualties, to do so, that we shall never let our resentment of wrong attempted at, or imposed upon us, cause a refusal to speak to you; for, were we to do so, it would exhibit a weakness foreign to propriety and sphere beneath that of a gentleman.

The direct charge of deception with which Standly was at that time suspected, and the allusions made to former manœuvres of his, were what he remained silent upon, was as unexpected as unlooked for from the source they came, and which for a time threatened his and the co-operating movements of the confederacy.

Just at the conclusion of the difficulty unfolded by a reconciliation between our young gentlemen and Standly, Melvin accompanied by Urnsden, entered their apartment. With the two latter, Laurence and Hyne were social, agreeable, and in every way the gentlemen, and with Standly, not so, yet respectful, whenever in the course of comments theirs came in collision, or in contact with his.

The engagement of our two friends to Ellen and Susan, and the change that had taken place upon prospects in their late interview with them at the mansion, involved other mysteries imperatively necessary with Laurence and Hyne, to obtain a solving of and the determinations at which they had already arrived, of carrying their point at all hazards, excited

in them on the occasion a particularly polite as civil deportment towards Melvin and Urnsden.

To their occasional allusions to the ladies, and frequent pleasant hours they had passed in their company, Laurence and Hyne could effect nothing but a vague as far-fetched reply, from one at least of the two then in their room.

The want of that familiar and unrestrained intimacy between Standly and his young companions, heretofore observed by Melvin and Urnsden, soon caused the two latter to withdraw; and in a few moments, Standly following them, the three elder were soon in Melvin's apartment, while the young gentlemen remained in theirs.

"A hurricane of furies are now beginning to vent their influence over us, around us, and every where. We shall, for the future, move in this region, George," said Hyne, as the latter rose from his seat and began walking forth and back across their room. "Standly," he continued, "has this night confirmed our suspicions entertained of him; has violated the confidence reposed in him by your and my father, and as a reward of their kindnesses has become treacherous to us in the very hour when his services as a friend were most needed."

"True," replied Laurence, "and he has given another forcible proof of the fact, 'that those upon whom the most brilliant marks of favor are bestowed, are they who too often become the most formidable as inveterate foes to their benefactors.'"

"What shall we now do?" resumed Hyne, as he returned to his seat.

"Do," replied Laurence· "as we have always

done, of course; act honorably and fear no danger, though it were thronged upon us numerous as the sands of an Arabian desert. To-morrow," continued Laurence, "will be a day of greater moment to us, than that of the present night is trying to our feelings. On this occasion we have seen an Iscariot, and knowing him to be so, can guard against his future treachery. To-morrow we shall renew our pledges of unalterable affection; declare our further intentions to maintain them, and amidst all the ills that surround us, perfect our purposes, or die in the attempt to do so."

At this moment a tap was heard at their door.

"Come in," said Hyne; he had scarcely given assent to the privilege, when Sanco entered the room.

"A cold night, masters," bowing as he spoke, said Sanco.

"Yes; and what news have you in it?" inquired Hyne.

"Oh nothing, but what a little note will tell you of."

"Where is it?" inquired Hyne.

"Safe in my pocket, and when I warm my hands a little, you shall see it," replied Sanco.

"Who is the note from?" resumed Hyne.

"A lady," was the reply.

"Whom did she tell you to give it to?"

"Master Laurence" — returned Sanco, taking the note from his pocket, and presenting it, as he spoke.

Here Sanco was about leaving the room, when Hyne, giving him an order to remain, he did so—taking a standing position on the opposite side of the fire-place from where the gentlemen were seated at a table.

With that sort of anxiety and excitement of feeling

usually the attendants of persons in love, and particularly on receipt of any thing in the shape of letters from those of whom they are fond, Laurence was not long in opening the note, when he read from it as follows:

"*The Mansion, January 16th*, 1802.

"My Dear Sir:

"I have only a moment, taken from the time occupied by others of your sex with me and Susan, to inform you of an unforeseen as unavoidable event having taken place here, serving as a preventive to our meeting in the library, with you and Mr. Hyne, to-morrow morning at ten o'clock, as contemplated upon and agreed to at our last pleasant interview.

"Knowing the attachment of yourself and Mr. Hyne for us, and aware of the certainty of its being reciprocated, I think the privilege can be ventured without fear of censure or distrust from either of you, to say, Come *not* at ten o'clock in the morning, but at half past six o'clock to-morrow evening, when Susan and myself will promptly, as with pleasure attend you in this library, at the outer door of which, a servant will be waiting your arrival.

"In haste, truly yours,

"Ellen.

"To Mr. Laurence, Mountain Inn."

After both gentlemen had read the note Hyne resumed his inquiries of Sanco.

"Who," said he, "gave you that note to Mr. Laurence?"

"Master," replied Sanco. "Servants ought to be

very particular and careful of what they speak about, so ought white people," he continued, "and I, knowing my place, and being taught by my owner how to behave, am fearful of doing wrong in saying anything more about that note, or of from whose hand I received it."

"You are indeed cautious," replied Hyne, "but in the exercise of caution it is allowable, in all, to be their own judges, if capable, upon discretion, and acting upon it are sometimes safe in confiding to others, and particularly when the matter concerns them, and not those by whom that confidence is reposed."

"You talk right, young master, but tell me how I may know myself safe in speaking further upon things that I know, to you and Master Laurence?" replied Sanco.

"There is, belonging to men, a principle, among many others, called *honor*, more often abused than kept *inviolate*. Mr. Laurence and myself can do no more, for the present, than offer a promise for its safe keeping between you and us, when we now ask your aid and assistance in matters where we alone are concerned, and of which, no doubt, you know more from things transpiring since we have been among these mountains than all the knowledge we have of them can possibly inform you of," returned Hyne.

"You speak wisely of honor, and know how it ought to be used, when you and Master Laurence pledge its observance with me, in affairs that may terminate as you wish them, but either for or against you, must result in severe treatment to me if betrayed," replied Sanco.

"I have great respect, however," continued he, "for gentlemanly and honorable men, and here give you a servant's word, which I make my honor, to serve you faithfully in things that I know at the present time most concerns you."

At that moment the ring of a bell in the bar-room attracted his attention, and saying as he left their door, "Danger awaits you, masters, but fear nothing." Sanco was soon elsewhere in the Inn.

"From what we have just witnessed in the manners and discernment of that slave, your remarks seem to be true, Sam," said Laurence; when you said to him, "no doubt you know more from things transpiring since we have been among those mountains, than all the knowledge we have of them, can possibly inform you of. And," continued Laurence, "since, as Sanco said, when he left us, 'danger awaits you, but fear nothing, masters,' we must keep sacred everything he tells us, in order to be his equal in known integrity, and other virtues. Things that have been falsely alleged as not having an existence, owing to the ill-treatment of owners of slaves in slave-holding States."

Time had now passed to near midnight's hour, yet our young gentlemen feeling no inclination for sleep, continued an interchange of opinions with comments upon events present, and those to come with them, till the return of Standly to their room produced a silence that induced each one of the three to retire for the remainder of the night.

At daybreak the next morning our young gentlemen rose from their beds, and, though intensely cold, as was the weather, they were out upon one of those accustomed walks spoken of, and in which to reflect

upon and speak of the future of their intentions with which everything now around them seemed saturated. Nor were they to whom they were in their own way opposed less engaged. For Standly, as well as Melvin and Urnsden, had had a long conversation with each other the preceding evening, and had cogitated much upon the course intended to be pursued by them and their associates.

A letter had been written the previous night by Melvin to the fathers of the young men, relative to the projects of the confederacy thus far; of their contemplated future course, and requesting the pleasure of those gentlemen's company at the "Fotheringay Mansion" at a subsequent specified period. A messenger had, that morning, been dispatched to the post office with the letter, and all on the part of the confederates was now ready for a further prosecution of their plans.

At the breakfast table a social and familiar interchange of conversation was unknown, and when their appetites for food had become satisfied the young gentlemen re-entered their room, leaving Standly, Melvin and others in the dining room.

"All seems one entire round of gloom to us now, George," said Hyne, as they had closed their door and were about resuming their seats. "Three days since, our hopes were buoyant as air, and our prospects of happiness flattering as assurances, in view of possession, could make them. The present time with us, however, and things with which it is connected, are striking instances of the fates reserved for man in fortune's wheel of time, and uncertainty with regard to heir good or ill effects, in the affairs of life."

"Come Sam," replied Laurence, "don't philosophise yourself into a state of imaginary sweetness. You forget yourself; I give you credit for your short yet truthful comment upon our condition, but there is something else for us to do besides that of thinking upon the past and upon the present.

"Have you forgotten our determination, consequent upon an acceptance by the ladies and their promised disclosure to us. To-night that is to be given, and, if favorable, so much easier the conquest, and if to the reverse, all that remains for us to do is—to know the worst, act upon it for the best, according to circumstances, and by a cool, deliberate and persevering course, obtain our object by a proper exercise of the means at hand."

After the above manner of reasoning the remainder of the day was spent by the gentlemen. And tea over, and near the hour appointed, they set out, intensely cold as it was, through a deep snow that had fallen, to comply with the requirement contained in Ellen's noté of the previous evening. The servant spoken of was in attendance, who, upon their knock at the outer door, opened it, when they were soon in the library, seated by a comfortable fire, and near a table which a few days before had become familiar to them.

They had scarcely become seated before the ladies entered the apartment, (and after that expressive greeting which ought to govern those of both sexes, similarly situated,) with an air of dignity and collected composure Ellen presented to Laurence a sealed letter, which, upon opening, he read from it as follows:

"*The Mansion, Jan.* 17, 1802

"MY DEAR SIR:

"That which you now have a right to expect, as well as a license to know, is now being disclosed to you by me; and surrounded by circumstances of which, as I have heretofore said, you know nothing, the following will only add an additional surprise to the score of mysteries with which you have been and are still surrounded. Amid them, it will devolve upon you, and one other, to adopt and prosecute such measures as will be most conducive in perfecting your plans to become possessed of them who are, as yet, yours by promise only.

"The same motives actuating us in becoming yours by marriage, will, in a like confidence in your integrity and honor, prompt us to obey, in holding ourselves in readiness to do our parts in your attempts to make us so. But brevity is the present requisite, and I must enter at once upon what I have promised you.

"Though by every occular demonstration and conclusion upon circumstances with which conversant, since your arrival among the mountains, you are doubtless of opinion that Susan and myself are near relatives of Mr. Urnsden, it is a duty due from us to say that we are not so! Nor is there a particle of his blood, however remote the consanguinity, that flows in our veins.

"From circumstances of which you will, in a more appropriate hour than the present, be apprized, we have lived, (as you have a proof of,) in his family; and to its credit, suffice it to say, that every

kindness has been, thus far, in the necessaries of life, experienced by us.

"Mr. Urnsden's associations in early life have made him wealthy; and in the course of those events, it would seem, we have become victims of his and the plans of his associates in prosperity's spoil, to make us the wives of those of his choice; and in doing so, not to allow us the privilege (let alone the time and opportunity) of ratifying such events with our own free will and approval.

"Such acts, on the part of those to whose control we have been, and are yet subject, are revolting to our feelings, as well as sense of justice, and are, no doubt, greatly obnoxious to the high-toned sentiments of him and his friend to whom I am now writing.

"In conclusion, I shall only add (for the opportunity is a stolen one to say what I have,) that if you and him, to whom this is equally addressed, entertain now the same sentiments of affection for the *deaf and dumb* as was a few days ago so warmly expressed for them, they will hold themselves in readiness (if no other more agreeable way can be devised, in order to become so,) to place themselves under your protection as well as honor, in an elopement, to become your wives and you our husbands, by a mutual and lasting consent.

"I am, dear sir, with much esteem, yours,

"ELLEN.

"To Mr. Geo. Laurence."

During the perusal of the letter by both gentlemen, one reading over the shoulder of the other, the ladies resorted to the mode formerly spoken of to effect further purposes.

"This brings us now to a proper understanding of the present, and calls for an immediate action upon the future," said Laurence, in a usually articulated tone of voice, and as he yet held the open letter in his hand, "the ladies," he continued, "have honored us with their affection, as they have with their confidence; to maintain both, ought to be, as it must be, now, our chief aim, be the consequences what they may to us."

"I cordially concur with you in opinion as well as determination," replied Hyne; "and now," he continued, "let us get from them a few more items, upon which to base our first steps in that which so imperatively demands our immediate attention."

Shortly after this conversation between the two friends had taken place, the following was presented by Laurence to Ellen:

"*The Mansion, Jan'y* 17, 1802.

"MISS ELLEN:

"That with which you have this night honored us, is, as you have properly said, what we have known nothing of 'till within the present hour, and which circumstances falling casually under our notice, proclaim the truth of.

"All now remaining for yourself and Miss Susan to do, is to afford us further information upon occurrences that have passed in review before us, and upon those yet wrapped in mystery, that the future of our intended course may present. Is this proposition agreeable, and one to which you will assent? if so, we will ask a few more questions.

"With unalterable esteem for those to whom it belongs, we are —

"GEORGE L. LAURENCE
"SAM. L. HYNE."

To that note was the following reply:

"*The 'Mansion,' Jan'y* 17, 1802.

"DEAR SIRS,—Doubt not our sincerity and entire willingness to place ourselves under your protection, care and instruction, since it is our firm belief that in doing so we will be safe.

"That you have asked for of us, is hereby granted. Of us, ask what questions you please, and the confidence now placed in you, will prompt an immediate reply. While, in the meantime, we are assured that a mutual privilege will be allowed, as well as complied with on your parts to,

"Sincerely yours,

"ELLEN.
"SUSAN.

"To Messrs. Geo. L. Laurence
and Sam. L. Hyne."

The joint note of the ladies to the gentlemen, caused the likewise written questions of them, in a united request, as follows:

"Will you inform us of your maiden names, or give us those by which to address you for the present and in the future of our contemplated plans?

"Do you think it advisable to inform Urnsden of our affection for you, and to ask his consent to our respective unions?

"Can Melvin be trusted as an auxiliary to our plans?

"Is Sanco trustworthy, and can we use him with safety?

"Do you know of any neighbor who can be admitted to our confidence?

"Would it not be advisable, in the event of a denial by Urnsden, to make our visits to the 'Mansion few and far between,' and in the meantime, keep up a correspondence during our preparations for (if necessary) an elopement?

"Could you not make your appearance, occasionally, at the Mountain Inn?

"Do you know any one acquainted with the respective ranges of those mountains, through the secret pass-way of, and nearest point to dense settlements—to clear them in safety?

"Truly as ever yours,

"G. L. LAURENCE,

"S. L. HYNE."

"To Misses Ellen and Susan."

As soon as they could commit it to writing, the ladies replied:

"*The Mansion, Jan'y* 17, 1802.

"GENTLEMEN:

"You were introduced to us as the niece and daughter of the brother of Mrs. Dierdoffe. It is not at present wise, nor indeed, necessary to your purpose, to give our real names, and in future, till a more appropriate time, we ask of you to know and address us by the name of Dierdoffe.

"It may in the end be a benefit for you to ask the consent of Mr. Urnsden to our union, but under existing circumstances we fear a denial. In future Mr. Melvin may be, but not now, a beneficial auxiliary to our plans; better to let him alone and merely watch his movements for the present.

"Though Sanco be a slave, he is, nevertheless, honorable, and can be with safety confided in.

"We know several who are intimately acquainted with the different passes through the mountains; but at present, must claim some time for reflection before recommending to you a suitable person for so important a trust as that will be to you and those in your care and under your protection.

"Of your visits to the 'Mansion,' subsequent to an application to Mr. Urnsden, (if made) we think there is no necessity for them to be any less 'few and far between, than previous.

"It may become necessary for each one of us to write occasionally. We can make occasional visits to the Inn with safety.

"Our knowledge of the passes through the mountains is not to be relied upon; but will try to find our those whose knowledge of them can be taken.

"For the present we can stay with you no longer, for fear of being missed from the company of others in the parlor, where our presence is now required; therefore, think it not rudeness in us for saying so, and still rely upon our future, as our former acts have been for your benefit.

Yours,

"ELLEN,
"SUSAN."

"To Messrs Laurence and Hyne."

Soon after the reply of the ladies was read, the adieu was given, and our travellers retracing their course to the Inn, were in possession of a new series of thought.

"It is not yet ten o'clock," said Hyne, as upon approaching a candle he looked at his watch. "And," he continued, "as that which most effects relief to the wearied mind is music, I now move that we amuse ourselves, for near the last time, perhaps, upon the instruments we have been favored with the loan of from those, now ours, by promise."

"Agreed," replied Laurence, and in a few moments their room resounded with the masterly tones of the violin and flute.

Since his recent quarrel with his young companions, Standly had removed his quarters to another apartment of the Inn, and was now seldom seen by them, except at the dining-table, where he continued austerely fixed in his purpose, and distant as ever toward them; and amid the addition of his now new acquaintances and those of his old ones, he seemed to have become an ingrate to those who had aided and assisted, and brought him into the road of wealth, by his neglect of their children among strangers and in a distant country from that of the home of their birth.

Base ingratitude! thou art the offspring of his Satanic Majesty, and by thy influence, man not only treats his fellow-man rudely, but constantly, is abusive of His mercies, and insolent to the Divine Author of this existence.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Life like the see saw reciprocates, as long as the balance is retained all's well; but when preponderance of ills bring men low, no matter how kind those to whom most so, are they by whom a benefactor is most neglected as most forgotten.

For several days everything wore the appearance of calmness, nor was the least impediments thrown in the way of visits at will of the gentlemen to the "Mansion."

It was at that period of their affairs the gentlemen had flattered themselves that a reaction for the better had taken place. Urnsden had become more social and polite; reserve, so long his attendant, had been dismissed from service, and that frank and generous deportment, that so eminently distinguishes the two friends from a foe, was assumed and really well played by him.

Within that time our gentlemen had frequently dined and supped at the mansion, and, on more than one occasion, had amused themselves at games of whist in the family circle.

Here they had often met with Melvin, Miller and Standly. The two former exhibiting a degree of affability, much calculated to change distrust into confidence; while the latter, still retaining his bad graced attempts at dignity and remaining reserved, would only, when the link of conversation, by those in whose company he was, required it, notice his young and now shunned friends.

The ladies had made frequent visits at the Inn, where too, in the sitting or parlor apartment, of that establishment, they had met with and spent many agreeable hours with their beaux ideal of affection.

In one of those interviews and in the midst of that round of interesting communication, ever the delight of persons whose hearts are co-partners in affection, as were those then present, the man spoken of as having been seen in the library entered the parlor. At his appearance, both ladies rose and courteously saluting him, Ellen presented a chair upon which he seated himself at a respectful distance from the company he had thus intruded upon.

A profusion of Sampsonian signs of strength being in dishevelled order, and as it rested upon the cape of a coat, corresponding with the balance of his apparel, that, like its owner, had had a better appearance in days, to both, then passed, and long since neglected as forgotten. The Maniac was strongly developed in his person and actions, while, at intervals, he spoke rationally and made use of strikingly impressive as sensible remarks.

In a few moments the stranger rose from his seat, and advancing to the one occupied by Ellen, made a respectful bow and signs, requesting her note-book and pencil. When she had given them to him he resumed his chair, and with the book resting upon one knee across the other, he wrote:

"The foxes, they have holes and are cunning."

"The birds of the air, they can fly, have nests, and are sometimes caged; when so, like ladies, ought to be more prized and better taken care of by men than they are."

"The Son of Man—he was betrayed and made a victim of, by a villain who is the chief of many followers of him now in the world."

Here the stranger returned to Ellen her note-book and pencil, and in the next moment left the room.

"Who is that man?" enquired the gentlemen, as he left the door.

"He is one of many unfortunates whom ill fate has consigned to the wretched as horrible state of insanity," replied Ellen. "And he has two sons, who are supporters and protectors of their mother, two sisters, and their wretched father. The mother and daughters are sensible, modest and discreet women, and his sons deserving and gentlemanly men, and, as Susan and myself have thought, suitable persons for you to engage in order to facilitate your intended purposes."

The recommendation of Ellen, sustained by that of Susan, was sufficient, and in the course of that interview it was settled and agreed upon that the young men spoken of were to be sent for by Ellen, and after her and Susan had made known their business with them, they were to be sent to Laurence and Hyne at the Inn.

In the course of that interview Hyne asked: "Why it was that the servants as well as all others about and coming to the Mansion and Inn when spoken to by him and Laurence, made no reply, and invariably put the fore finger of their right hand perpendicularly across their lips?"

"That is," was the reply, "because Mr. Urnsden and Mr. Melvin exercise a commanding influence over nearly all among these mountains. And," continued their informant, "among that few who are not so, are

those by whose aid and your management we hope to be relieved from the tyranny to which we have been so long subjected. The others are they who it would be as impossible to induce departure from instruction, as it is for you to move one of the mountains by which we are surrounded. Thus," she continued, "I have given you an additional statement of Susan's and my situation here, and to be delivered from, depends solely upon yourself and Mr. Laurence."

Here the ladies signified their departure for home, and in a little time were on their way, escorted by their beaux, through a broad pathway that the snow had been cleared from, leading from the inn to the mansion. On their arrival at the door, the gentlemen declined an invitation to go in, and returning to their room found Urnsden and Melvin seated by a comfortable fire in it.

"We have assumed a privilege, gentlemen, for which, if offensive, we ask pardon," said Urnsden.

"No apology is necessary, sir," replied Hyne, just as Melvin had been called out of the room.

Soon after Melvin had left, Urnsden was about following, when Laurence said to him:

"Can you allow us a few moment's conversation with you, alone, this evening?"

"With pleasure, sir. At what time?" inquired Urnsden.

"At seven o'clock," returned Laurence.

In a few moments the gentlemen were alone, when they decided upon taking that opportunity of knowing how they stood in Urnsden's estimation, in asking of him the hands of the ladies.

The hour arrived, and Urnsden, punctual in his attendance, entered their apartment.

On that occasion he was social, and pleasingly communicative; and in a few moments, adverting to his habits of business, asked—

"What is yours at the present time with me, gentlemen?"

To this question Laurence replied, "You have, Mr. Urnsden, been an eye-witness of the attentions paid by myself to Miss Ellen, as well as those of my friend, Mr. Hyne, to Miss Susan. Those attentions from the manner received have caused an affection in us, already reciprocated by them, lasting as life. All now remaining to complete our happiness is your consent to their union with us. It is proper here to inform you, sir, that neither Mr. Hyne or myself have any expectancies, save through those we may merit, from a high sense of duty and practice of it, to our honored parents. Should this recommendation, added to an industrious and honorable deportment, and an unceasing affection satisfy you,—we claim, at your hands, the gifts just asked for."

For some minutes after Laurence had closed his remarks, a profound silence ensued between the parties concerned, when Urnsden replied:

"Gentlemen, at such a time as the present is, it is natural for the mind of the applicant, as well as that of the person applied to, to be (if ever) reflective. I have in truth witnessed your affection and attention, and am flattered with the preference you entertain for those whom you have just asked of me the bestowal of upon you. And am here compelled to say, that that gift is not now mine to make; consequent upon

other arrangements. My refusal of your application," continued Urnsden, "is not intended to lessen my friendship for you, and as an earnest of what I say, here repeat to you the pleasure, I and my family will always feel, in seeing you at the Mansion."

In a short time, Urnsden withdrew, and the young men were alone.

"The *consequences* of other *arrangements*, *others* will have to bear," said Hyne, after some time of silence ensued between the two friends. "Come, George," continued Hyne, "let us apply to our old friend, Apollo, for a temporary respite, and amid his round of pleasures, create a calm, ever better to face the foe with, than that of rage." They did so, and again passed their evening by pleasant enjoyments in music.

Upon one of their visits to the mansion, Laurence and Hyne, at their entering the parlor, met with two young men, strangers to them, in a like pantomimic conversation with the ladies, to those they had had so frequently with them. For a few moments, the crimson blush of confusion mantled the cheek of each lady, and ere our young friends had taken seats on an opposite and vacated sofa, near the fire, the strangers rose from their chairs and unceremoniously left the room.

The note-books of each lady, and of each gentleman, were brought into use soon after the strangers had left; and no allusion being made to the embarrassment of the ladies at their unexpected arrival, nor of the strangers and their singular deportment, our gentlemen became communicative upon their plans, and the further prosecution of them, and their now earnest desire of arriving at their final result. Their late inter-

view with Urnsden was spoken of, which Laurence related almost word for word.

On their then interview with Ellen and Susan, the miniatures of two gentlemen were discovered, resting upon the bosom of each one, while to their sides were tastily suspended splendid gold watches.

The youthful appearance of the keepsakes that rested upon the bosoms of those who had so frequently said they were theirs by promise, and the watches, that seemed, from their size, those worn by gentlemen, attracted the observation of our young friends, and drew from them the inquiry of, "Who the miniatures were intended to represent, and from whose hands the watches on their persons were presented?"

That question was unexpected, as coming from the source it did, and the ladies, again a little embarrassed, and somewhat piqued, severally replied:

"The miniature you see on my person is from him whom I love, and shall continue to do so till the last pulse becomes still that throbs in the bosom upon which it is now placed. And the watch by my side no less valuable—is from the same source."

Having similar objects in view, there was consequently a series of questions and answers returned between each two of the four.

"You cannot be serious in what you say, since you have so recently assured me, that, if necessary, you will elope, in order to become mine?" was a question presented by each gentleman, with looks of surprise.

"I have never been more so," was the calm reply of each lady.

Here the gentlemen were for some time mute as they who were then before them, and who had but a

few days before pledged their faith in unalterable affection.

While all were in a sombre mood, the attention of Hyne was drawn again to the watch worn by Susan, and upon which he had just discovered a sentence of some kind had been engraved, but what, from the position the watch occupied by her side, he was unable to discover.

Just at the time our gentlemen had (using a phrase of the present day) received their "walking papers," the Maniac, *sans ceremonie*, entered the parlor, and stepping to where the ladies and gentlemen were yet seated, said to the latter,—

"Strangers are not always to be trusted; but, when tried, they may be. Let me see your hands;" here taking one of each in his, looking sternly in the faces of Laurence and Hyne as he did so—then attentively examining the palms of their hands, he continued, "your faces betoken good hearts, and your hands say it is so. If you love—don't think that you are always right, and spoil what you have gained by being too suspicious. Jealousy paralyzes the mind, and like slow poison in the stomach, gradually destroys all the better qualities of the soul."

At closing the last remark, the stranger left the parlor as unconsciously as he entered it, and in a few moments after, our two friends having had their "walking papers," signed, sealed and delivered to them, rose from their chairs, made respectful bows to the ladies, and were soon again in their room at the Inn.

How much of that kind of work have you done, my fair readers! Is it with you as "regrets" are to a

party—written only because custom makes it necessary, and thought of no longer than the time employed in writing them; or are they not, sometimes regretted by you during life? And, suffer me to add, what think you of the state of love affairs now, between our ladies and gentlemen? For my own part, out of the respect in which you are held by me, and ought to be by others of my sex, and motives entertained of bettering the condition of all, from the views contained in this work, I shall tell you, as well as I can, how the difficulties between those of whom we have been speaking, were settled.

For the following two or three days the gentlemen kept their room, not however, as many do on such occasions, intently reflecting upon trouble—purchasing it at wholesale, and retailing it to themselves in a sort of spinning out of sorrow; but in calling to their aid the resuscitative influence of music, though at times, they spoke of the event and the best terms upon which to offer an adjustment. At length a joint letter was fixed upon, that read as follows:—

"*Mountain Inn, Jan. 20th*, 1802.

"'To err is human, to forgive, Divine.' If that Divinity to which the last part of the borrowed sentence, just written, is in professed imitation by you, we throw ourselves under its influence in the present instance, and when destruction is so threatening to our hopes.

"That we have committed that to which the first part of the sentence made use of refers, we feel no hesitation in the acknowledgment of; and, in doing so, own the high sense we entertain of the injustice

done you, in so glaring a manner as to suspect your want of sincerity in affection for us; and, we to stamp it with the seal of jealousy.

"If a sincere determination to do so no longer can possibly place us in the position once thought to have been occupied in your estimation; your forgiveness is solicited, and a recall to that rank asked for by

"GEO. L. LAURENCE.
"SAM. L. HYNE.

"To Misses Ellen and Susan Dierdoffe. The Mansion."

That letter had scarcely been directed and sealed and laid on the table, as it was, before the Maniac entered their room. Upon his head was a broad-brimmed beaver hat, that seemed to have been long in service, and having a triangular, or three-sided shape. On the left side of it was placed a plume, composed of part of the tail of a pheasant, and fastened to a kind of rosette composed of dressed deer-skin, and from which was suspended three neat tassels made of like material, fastened to the rosette by a large gilt button in the centre. Upon that occasion the Maniac wore a dressed deer-skin hunting-shirt, lined with the skins of the otter, with the fur side out. His pants were also of the dressed deer-skin, and united at the ankles by a pair of moccasins worn on his feet. One would have supposed him more sane than otherwise in the season of which we have been speaking. His hunting-shirt was lapped around his person, and made fast on the left side by means of a belt, made of dressed bear-skin, with a large buckle on one end of it.

On entering their room the stranger occupied, for a few moments, a standing position near the centre of it, from whence he seemed to eye, minutely, everything about the room. Then advancing towards the fire, he took a seat upon the same chair by the table that Laurence had been seated upon and writing at, and that he had a moment before vacated.

"This unfortunate again here," said Laurence, as he took a chair that placed the stranger between himself and Hyne.

"Good morning!" said the latter to the stranger.

"Mornings are not always good," he replied.

"Are you well to-day?" returned Hyne.

"Better, perhaps, than some others," replied the stranger, as he looked intently upon the fire.

"What do you mean?" continued Hyne.

"What you would like to know," was the reply, as the stranger, without moving his head to the right or the left, still kept his eyes fixed upon the fire.

"What use is there in it, to speak to this unfortunate man, Sam? It is," continued Laurence, "a useless expenditure of time only, and which we can employ more pleasantly."

"The creature might throw some light upon our present condition, as it is said that 'fools sometimes speak wisely,'" replied Hyne.

"Wise, wise, wise," was the immediate murmuring expression of the stranger. Then continuing, he said, "Love, when sincere, is good; and disappointment in it is—bad. Confidence betrayed is unmanly, and worse than an open enemy."

Here the stranger was again silent, and changing his

position, his face fronting the table, he fixes his eye intently upon the letter.

"Hush," said Hyne, as Laurence was about to speak. "Let us watch his actions," continued Hyne, "and hear what more he has got to say."

Hyne had scarcely made the request, before the stranger, looking at the direction of the letter, continued: "For war, or for peace—I am ready! Let me think! Ah! it is for peace—distrust! treachery!! Those ragged set of animals! Clear the way, and let me go!" thus saying, the stranger rose from his chair, and seizing the letter, was, in the next instant, out of their room.

The Inn had been, after breakfast that morning, vacated—that is, Melvin, Standly, and others, usually about it, had gone elsewhere, and Sanco himself being absent, of course the attempts of Laurence and Hyne made to discover the whereabouts of the stranger, were all useless.

"You had better have taken my advice," said Laurence, after they had returned to their room, "and have watched that Maniac, instead of letting him watch us. Doubtless," he continued, "that letter will fall into the hands of either Standly, Melvin or Urnsden, and if it does, we shall be, in that event, truly betrayed, and more low in the estimation of them to whom it is addressed than if we had never written. For, as it was, we were discarded for a justifiable cause, and one that I hate myself for, for ever having entertained."

"True," replied Hyne, "but we may yet be fortunate, and even in this most unexpected affair I have no idea, as yet, of purchasing trouble in advance of

our use of it. We must wait awhile before laying in supplies serving the present demand," continued Hyne.

"You are more of a philosopher than I thought you was, Sam, and in future I shall profit by your present example and take lessons from you," replied Laurence.

Our two friends were still descanting upon the "ups and down" they had experienced among the mountains when Sanco made his appearance.

The agreement formerly entered into, between them and Sanco, caused no hesitation whatever with our young gentlemen, in immediately informing him of what had happened.

When they had done so, Sanco shook his head and remained for some moments silent, at length he said: "This is ill luck to you, masters, but may be I can fix it all right again. The *scripter* says, Massa Solomon was a mighty wise man, and I think, in these days, if we have not wise ones there is some cunning ones, at least, among us. Now, who would 'sposed that Mr. Sligo, so long inside out in his mind, would put enough of it back again as to make him take your letter to the ladies and run off with it? But that is the way," continued Sanco, "that a good many do and who often make their fortins from *that* justly belonging to others. Mr. Sligo," continued Sanco, "sometimes talks sensible, and at them times I have often heard him, in his own way, (for he is strange in that) speak of the three travellers at the Mountain Inn, particularly of you two, and in such a way too as makes me believe he likes you. I know him," continued Sanco, "to be a great friend of Miss

Susan and Miss Ellen, and I don't think he will let any one else see your letter, but that he will take it right straight to them."

"I hope so," replied Hyne; "but do you not think the ladies will think strange of the letter being in his hands?"

"Not at all," replied Sanco; "for they know him well, and may perhaps answer your letter by him."

"Indeed!" said Laurence, somewhat surprised.

"Yes, master," returned Sanco, "and, by your permission, I'll go and find out something about it."

At that remark, Sanco left their room, and our two friends were again alone.

The hope renewed by the remarks of the servant, his opinions expressed of Sligo, and the course he would probably take for their benefit, seemed to quiet for a time the influence of suspense upon the minds of the gentlemen. They waited patiently the arrival of the dinner hour, when, as was the case during the morning, no one might be at the table, they would have an uninterrupted interview with Sanco. But in this they were disappointed; for, instead of being alone there, they found an additional number of strangers, and the eyes of all occasionally resting upon them.

That air of consequence usually the attendant of the "would-be-great," was being shown in its entire array by Mr. Standly, and the assumption of *modest impudence* shown upon the occasion, called him into notice and attention by those to whom he had, in the "bar-room," been just introduced.

Being like the "scape goat" in that crowd, our two friends, after being mute as those of whom they were

thinking, soon rose from the table and entered their room.

Laurence and Hyne had been there but a short time before, in a room adjoining, and separated from their's by a plank partition only, was overheard, in a low tone, the following conversation:

"The arrival of those strangers from New York, has created much of a change in things here."

"That is very true," said Clermont to Armsdale. "I wonder what Nevelle and Everett think now?" continued Clermont.

"Think!" replied Armsdale, "Why as they have always thought, since the affair was explained to them."

"What do you mean?" resumed Clermont.

"Why that they are too noble hearted to insist upon having that which, by promise, belongs to others."

At the close of that remark, Irwin and Yancey entered.

"Boys!" said the latter, "the Captain says you think too loud, and has sent me in to tell you so."

"By jingo," replied Clermont, "that's true enough."

"The remembrance," he continued, "of the Guilford counter-sign must be present, and we must learn to think like the '*deaf and dumb*,' without speaking. But say, Yancey," he continued, in a lower tone, "what are the orders of the day? Has the Captain issued them to Lieutenant Everett?"

"The orders are not yet issued, but I expect they shortly will be, as the Lieutenant is in council with Captain Nevelle and others," was the reply.

"Yancey," continued Clermont, "what do you think

of that man, Standly, you were talking with, just as Rufus and I left the dining table?"

"I think of him," replied Yancy, "as I do of many—he is a two-faced man, and will not stop at any time to sacrifice his friends for the sake of popularity."

Yancy had scarcely finished his remark before Captain Nevelle and Lieutenant Everett entered. The latter delivered to each man a copy of a written order, and in a few moments after the company dispersed; leaving the Inn to its usual occupants. Melvin, Standly, the two young gentlemen and servants attending.

The conversation overheard and attentively listened to, created some degree of surprise with Laurence and Hyne. The cause of their being alluded to and associated with the name of Standly by entire strangers, was unusual as unexpected to them, and consequently the circumstances with which all the remarks they had heard were connected, added another mystery to the number with which they were still surrounded.

It is said that "ignorance is bliss." On this occasion, our young gentlemen proved the assertion. For when the great luminary of day had cast his last brilliant adieu upon the top of each towering mountain that stood in majestic splendor on each side of the Fotheringay mansion, and night had closed those scenes in its sable attire, their room resounded with exhilarating sounds of delightful music. Thrice happy are they who can thus amuse themselves! for it is sanctioned by the All Wise, and dissipates many a gloomy hour.

But, reader, I must attend to what is promised you.

The night had far advanced, when Sanco entered the gentlemen's room. Polite and particularly attentive as he had been, and still was to them, he had no sooner entered the apartment than he began to adjust and arrange different things in it that were out of order, such as is usually the case in all bachelor establishments.

If the ladies do not believe what is said in the close of the last sentence, I'll refer them to my brethren in a bad cause, as it is at best, to prove it. And while a glance of the mind brings in review our numerous rank and file, I beg leave here to add, that the ladies ought to take into consideration how far they have been the cause of it. They, it is true, are "born to be *asked for*;" but in using the two prerogatives thus given by birth, the word *No* is sometimes, in subsequent events, found to be more of a disadvantage than the word *Yes* would have been. I beg pardon, however, for the digression, and shall proceed.

"Masters," said Sanco, as he was putting an additional supply of wood to their fire, "I love music, and it always does me good to come into your room while you are playing."

"We thank you for the compliment," replied Hyne. "But tell us, Sanco, why you usually call us 'young masters.'

"It is," he replied, "because I have taken a liking to you, and it may be that I shall one day belong to either one or the other of you. For, who knows," he continued, "but what master Melvin (who I like too)

may some day or other change from what he now is, and in that change, one of you may own me."

"Such a thing might be," returned Hyne, "but at present it is not even possible."

"You don't know, Massa," replied Sanco, "for things very often take sudden changes."

"True," replied Hyne, "but of this we will speak no more, at least for the present. Say," continued Hyne, "have you any news about our letter?"

"Yes, Master, that is all as it should be," replied Sanco.

"What do you mean?" said Hyne.

"Why, Master, that I was not mistaken in my opinions of Mr. Sligo. This evening I went to the mansion, and while I was talking in the kitchen with the servants, I found that they liked you and Master Lawrence as well as I do. We talked a good deal about both of you. At that time Miss Susan and Miss Ellen came in, and making a sign for me to come into the library before I went away, they then went into the house. After talking an hour or two with the servants, I done what I was told to do, when Miss Sue gave me this note."

Here Sanco handed the note; it was opened, and read as follows:

"*The Mansion, Jan'y* 20, 1802.

"GENTLEMEN:—

"We are in possession of a letter directed to us, but from the person (Mr. Sligo) by whom delivered, are not of the opinion that you intended it by him, nor that we have, from that circumstance, a right to open

it, We send this to you by Sanco, who is authorized to bring to us your answer.

"Respectfully,

"ELLEN,
"SUSAN."

"Messrs. Laurence and Hyne,
"Mountain Inn."

If such a thing can be at the same moment in the human mind as pleasure and pain, it was then so with the gentlemen. For, in the first instance, they were pleased that their letter had escaped falling into the hands of the confederates, and in the next mortified at its having been taken from them by Sligo. Soon after they had read the note of the ladies to them, the following reply was penned:

"*The Inn, at night, Jan'y* 20, 1802.

"LADIES:

"We regret to say that the letter intended for you was not presented by the hand of another than that by which it was. Please read it, and honor us with your reply.

"Very resptf'y, your obt. ser'ts,
"GEORGE L. LAURENCE,
"SAM. L. HYNE."

"To Misses Susan and Ellen Dierdoffe."

The next evening, and as soon as he had gotten through with his duties of waiting upon the gentlemen and others at table, Sanco went to the Mansion, and on his return brought the following letter:

"*The Mansion, Jan'y* 21, 1802.

"GENTLEMEN:

"At your sanction we have opened your letter to us of yesterday.

"Possessed and in the practice of that quality of the heart of which you speak, in the latter part of the borrowed sentence made use of in your appeal for reinstatement, we entertain no hesitation in saying, that your frank acknowledgment of error, and your intention to do as you have done *no more*, have gained our forgiveness of the past; while now, as in the future, you are reinstated to that rank occupied by you, and which, when it was lost, you were the fault of.

"At your earliest convenience the pleasure of seeing you will be shown by

"ELLEN.
"SUSAN."

"To Messrs. Laurence & Hyne, Mountain Inn."

Having relieved our young gentlemen from their present difficulties, restored them to favor and to renewed hopes of earthly bliss; and, consequently, complied with, my promise to you, reader, I shall, by your permission, close the present and commence the next chapter with new material, as well as a continued desire to amuse and interest you

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

No time is more properly spent by men than when in pursuit of virtuous objects.

THERE is, perhaps, at no period of life an event more pleasing than that of an assurance that the affections of an honorable man are being reciprocated and accepted by the opposite sex.

At such a time the latter voluntarily resigns the prerogative of self-government, concentrates the entire of all in the looked-for supremacy of her liege lord, in whose keeping is placed her future destiny; and to whose capital of wisdom, discretion and command, she relies with implicit confidence in the future of good and ill.

How far this truth is abused by my sex, gentle reader, is left for yourselves to judge of, and my fellow men to reflect upon.

The letter of the ladies formed a new platform for action in the minds of their admirers; and, the day following its receipt, our gentlemen presented themselves at the mansion. They had been in the parlor but a few minutes, before the entry in it of the ladies. A pleasant smile occupied the countenances, of each as they entered, when, at the same moment their books were respectively presented to the gentlemen; containing a like and following sentence:—

"You have erred and have acknowledged it. I have forgiven the wrong done. Rely upon the future as being intended and practiced for your good by me."

A recurrence was soon made by the parties respectively, to that which is already familiar to the mind of my readers. In that interview, everything relative to and necessary in the intended elopement was entered into and agreed upon, save the engagement of the sons of Sligo, and arrangement of that part that Sanco was to perform in it. These were left to the judgment and skill of the gentlemen.

The moon in its placid serenity, had assumed its refulgence of light, and aided by it our now refugees, from tyranny and obstinate refusal, were now determined to place themselves under the protection of those to whom they had vowed an inseparable allegiance.

The better to effect their purpose a convenience for leaving the Mansion, had been thought of by the ladies.

At the eastern wing of the building, and in its second story, there was a small balcony that overlooked a beautiful view of the river, as it passed in its meandering course through the valley below. In its course, it was crossed at intervals by the blazed pathway that had previously led our travellers to the Mountain Inn.

To retrace that route in their contemplated escape from the mountains, and then, "Far West," would be attended, as the ladies had informed their intended, with dangerous consequences, for two ostensible reasons. One consequent upon the want of "ferry," facilities in the then sudden rise of the river—the other, because those passes being the first, upon a knowledge of their absence, to which the attention of Urnsden and others would be drawn.

In furtherance of their plans for escape, it was stipu-

lated between the parties, that the ladies should come upon the piazza at the hour of twelve o'clock on the night agreed upon. From whence they were to descend by means of a rope-ladder. That article was to be sent them and received from the bearer at the entrance-door of the library. The trust thus reposed was to be assigned to one of the young Slygo's, who, in order to prevent suspicion, was to appear there, as if in search of his father, and to have their intended means of descent, concealed in an overcoat pretended to be for the old man.

The better to effect his purpose, Sligo was to appear at the door spoken of, at the same time that Sanco was to do so in the act of returning the instruments already known something of by my readers. Another care assigned Sligo was, to attend the ladies on their descent, take charge of their baggage, and to conduct their fair charge to the place designated for meeting the gentlemen.

The duties assigned Sanco was, to attend to and have the horses of the ladies and gentlemen in readiness, and stationed at the appointed hour at a few hundred yards from the Mansion, and concealed from its view by a thicket of cedars that stood near the commencement of their intended route. There the gentlemen were to await the arrival of the ladies, and from whence the party was to take its departure for a section of country more densely inhabited, and where the parties thus betrothed were to be united.

The plan matured and settled upon at the Mansion, our ladies bade their lovers adieu at a late hour that evening, and our two friends returned to the Inn.

Like the father of the "prodigal son," each of the

gentlemen in question had had given to them by their fathers a sum sufficient, at setting out upon their western tour, to answer their purposes in being above want, and to let them appear and act gentlemanly and genteel, as all should do, who are endowed with ability and thought beyond that of an idiot. Added to the supplies given to Laurence and Hyne, was a fund, separately placed in the hands of their fellow-traveller, and once looked upon friend, Standly, for the purpose of serving such necessary as honorable contingencies as might occur in their journey to the West and upon their return home.

So far as the necessary means for carrying out their purpose was concerned, the gentlemen were independent of Mr. Standly, and the next object of their attention was to procure horses for their contemplated guides through the mountains.

As yet the expected letter to them, upon that subject, from the ladies, had not been received. It was upon that that their introduction to, and engagement of their guides, depended; and two days having passed and no letter, the gentlemen began to think some unforeseen preventive had occurred to getting the persons selected for that duty. The third evening, however, relieved them of a suspense, in which each moment seemed to be an hour, with the interest of a half attached, when, in a short time after tea, a rap was heard at their door.

The gentlemen knew the rap. It was that of the servant, and in the next moment Sanco entered followed by the two young Sligo's. At their entry, the servant, in the exercise of that politeness to which he had been raised and was accustomed to, said: "Mas-

ters, the Misters Sligo," then, placing a chair for each, withdrew.

Here the elder of the two presented a letter to Laurence that read as follows:

"*The Mansion, Jan'y* 24, 1802.

"GENTLEMEN:

"We introduce to your acquaintance the bearer hereof, and his brother; Messrs. Mansfield and Stanhope Sligo, in compliance with our promise to you of some days since, and for the delay in doing so, the earnest with which we have thus far complied with your wishes must alone plead our excuse.

"It is with great pleasure that the persons now before you are recommended to your esteem and confidence, in events in which you as well as ourselves, are so much involved, and in which so much depends upon you as well as those who now write.

"Thinking, as we have, that it was a duty incumbent upon us to facilitate your designs and let our acts prove the earnest with which we have entered into them to effect mutual ends, we have, on our parts, gone so far as to have sent for and apprize those of whom spoken, of what is sought for at their hands; *that* they have kindly, as generously promised to perform. And to enable them the better to do so, we have presumed so far upon your sanction of the measure, as to have directed them to purchase a fine horse, saddle and bridle each.

"The (as the vain would say) '*crime of poverty*' being theirs, and having neither friends nor means by which to do so, we have directed them to select their steeds and equipments, passing them our words that

you would afford them the amounts required to complete their arrangements.

"In furtherance of our plan, and to avoid further concern and trouble to you, the two, and our mutual friends before you, have kindly offered to provide the rope and make a ladder for our means of descent from the balcony.

"But, oh! should it break in our present last proceeding steps to place ourselves under your care, how ominous of ills would it be! These thoughts, however, are not only idle, but a proof of the timidity natural to our sex, and must, by us be done away with, in view of the happiness so dearly contemplated upon; while, in the meantime, we must proceed with what remains on the present occasion for us to apprise you of.

"Of our wardrobe we have thought best, to take but little, as our wants in that particular, can, with more ease than the present, inconvenience of taking it, be supplied when needed. On arriving at our place of destination, and particularly when in our necessitated mode of travelling it would be an unnecessary incumbrance.

"For our convenience, and to secure that, we shall take of apparel, our friends have already provided for us, an old, and it is true, much worn, valise, that in travelling as we suppose, you can attach to your saddles without inconvenience.

"Of Sanco, it is only necessary here to say, that he understands us as well as he does you; and that nothing will be wanting on his part, to prove his fidelity to the cause of the fugitives.

"It is said, that woman is more of an adept in device

and effecting her purpose in them, than is the case in your sex; how far this may or may not be substantiated in events passed and those to come, remains, so far as we are concerned, for your judgment and opinions expressed, to determine.

"All is now in readiness—night after to-morrow night be on the alert—make your appearance at the mansion no more, at least for the present; and until you shall do so (if ever) when all will be better for you and us, than it is now.

"We can now *order*, but subsequently expect to be ordered. The reverse at the latter is now ours, and while so, we say to you, be at your posts at the proper time, where rely upon being joined with much pleasure by,

"Very truly yours,

"ELLEN,

"SUSAN."

"To Messrs Laurence and Hyne, Mountain Inn."

The two young men sent to them were treated with much kindness and respect by Laurence and Hyne; and by way of a proof of the confidence reposed in them, spoke familiarly upon preceding, present and future events till a late hour.

The several amounts spoken of by the ladies, and for which they had become indirectly responsible, to be paid for their horses, and other equipage, was that night placed into the hands of the elder of the brothers—Mansfield Sligo; and, after an understanding upon what was to be paid each one for his services as conductor, the young men rose from their seats, with an intention of departure for their home.

"Be seated," said Hyne, "till we write a line to the ladies by you;" and in a few moments, the following note was handed to Mansfield:—

"*The Inn, Jan'y* 24, 1802

"LADIES—

"That part of your letter requiring of us an immediate compliance with, is completed.

"That of which it speaks as yet to come, and upon which we acknowledge your right of command in, as well as instruction, shall with equal promptness be complied with, at the time appointed.

"Adieu, for the present; and, in the mean time, believe us sincerely yours,

"GEO. L. LAURENCE.
"SAM. L. HYNE."

"To Misses Susan and Ellen Dierdoffe—The Mansion."

The interpose between writing their note and the hour they were notified to be in readiness at the station assigned them, was employed by the gentlemen in arranging things with them necessary for departure.

Although assured that Sancho (using an expression of the present day) was "all right," it was a duty due to themselves, if no other, (as he had been their body servant, and from whom they had received several hints of his friendship and esteem) to sound his fidelity, and to know, if possible, if the information of danger, and their safety in it, could be trusted to his keeping.

The night preceding the one of their intended de-

parture from the Mountain Inn, Sanco, agreeable to previous arrangements with young Slygo, went into the room of the gentlemen for the purpose of getting and returning the musical instruments to the place from whence they had been received. While in the room, he was directed to return there, as soon as he had performed the business he was then upon.

"Yes, masters," replied Sanco, and soon he closed the door of that room in which our two friends had now but a short time to be and remain in as gentlemen travellers, and ere long, as fugitives from a supposed oppressor.

"The wheels of time seemed clogged and their movements appear slow indeed, when thought, more swift than the winged rays of light itself, encompasses its entire boundary of desire, and there waits a renewal of purpose," said Hyne, as the two friends sat, each involved in his own round of reflection.

"To-morrow night," he continued, "will be the commencement of difficulties to which we, as well as those who now look to us for protection, are alike unaccustomed. Our prize, however, is invaluable, and that alone, must be the stimulus to the entire possession of it; no matter what obstacles are placed in our way."

"You reason well! and see to it, that you fail not," replied Laurence, as the two were examining each a brace of fine rifle-barrelled pistols, which they had taken from their holsters, then lying on the table.

Soon after cleaning, loading, and returning the intruments of death to their proper places, Sanco entered the room.

"Well, Sanco," said Hyne, "what news have you?"

"All's right, master," replied Sanco.

"How?" asked Hyne.

"Why," replied Sanco, "I delivered the instruments, and Mr. Sligo, the rope-ladder safely, and without any person seeing us, but Miss Ellen and Miss Susan."

"Then you know," said Hyne, "what is going on at at the mansion?"

"Yes, master, well," replied Sanco.

"Who," inquired Hyne, "informed you of it?"

"I understand signs, masters, and they were plain ones, given to me by Miss Ellen and Miss Susan."

"Are their signs more plain to you, than they are to others," said Hyne.

"Perhaps not, master, but I know the ways of the ladies so well, and besides, they make signs and tell me by them who they like."

"Then, asked Hyne, "you know that we love them?"

"I do, master," replied Sanco," and know, too, that they love you!"

"What," said Hyne, "do you think of theirs and our plan?"

"First rate, master," replied Sanco. "And," continued he, "excuse me for saying, that if my brother and I were white men, and had such fine looking ladies as Miss Susan and Miss Ellen, in love with us, and were sure of our chance of getting them, as yours are of getting these ladies, we would think we were entering heaven, or some place near to it when we got them."

"You then have a good opinion of the ladies," continued Hyne.

"That's true, master, for I nursed them when

children, and know well they will make good wives, for they can make mighty nice shirts, and can knit stockings, too. And, let me tell you," continued Sanco, "that they can cut pants and vests, and then make them as well as any tailor can. And I believe, if it was necessary, could make their husbands a coat. When you get them, you will not, I think, put them to that kind of work, but will, no doubt, require of them a proper supervision and control of their domestic concerns."

"Did you not say just now, that you nursed the ladies?" said Hyne.

"I did, master; but that was at a time (as I told you the other night) when things were different with me to what they are now."

"Do you know," said Hyne, "that you are concerned in the plot of ours to run off with the young ladies?"

"Yes, master, and know from signs given, what part I have to perform in it," replied Sanco. "And depend upon it," continued he, "that I shall have your horses in readiness, and your holsters and saddle-bags put in their proper places upon your saddles."

The gentlemen being convinced that Sanco spoke knowingly as confidentially upon the several topics to which an advertence had been made, placed each, twenty dollars, in silver, in his hands, when the faithful creature, smiling as he spoke, thanked them and withdrew.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE ELOPEMENT.

Locks are good in their places and sometimes a protection against thieves; but with Master Cupid, are like a mist before the sun on a May morning.

MUCH of that sort of feeling usually the attendant of reflection upon those we love and by whom we anticipate the completion of, not only our dearest hopes, but fondest wishes, occupied the minds mutually of our now about to be fugitive lovers during the day, and until twelve that night on which their intended elopement took place.

The day passed; night came on; suppers, more partaken of from dishes of *anxiety* seasoned with *suspense*, than from good cups of coffee, with bread and animal food, were soon over with them, and each one in their respective apartments, were counting the steps of aged Time as he slowly as leisurely moved onward to the appointed hour.

What would have been your feelings, on the eve of such an event; and what, you may now be asking, was the result? Allow me a similar favor (your indulgence) as heretofore obtained, and you shall see, reader.

The hour at length arrived, and in it—

> "The midnight hour serenely smiled
> O'er nature's soft repose;
> No lowering cloud obscured the sky,
> Nor ruffling tempest blowed."

The language of the poet was well adapted to the scene presented on the occasion of which we are now speaking. Nor was that all; for, added to it was the silent attention of inanimate and animated nature, giving, as it were, their benediction upon passing events, disturbed only by the rustle of a southern breeze, then passing through the lofty pines and compact cedars.

It was then *love's own hour!* and in it, all that force of action, the impetus as result of influence, was being brought to and cast upon the shrine of preferment.

But, reader, I forget my promise and desire, and for your sake will proceed.

That signal used on a former occasion, and more strikingly impressive than the one we are now speaking of, was given.

The cock crowed!

"Come, Will," said Sanco to his brother, "it is now near the hour when our young mistresses and our young masters are to meet. You, as well as myself and sister Sallie, are alike in the secrets of Miss Ellen and Miss Susan. We must do our duty, and not deny them the performance of it. You go to the mansion—wake Sally, and tell her to wake the ladies, while I go to the gentlemen's room. After you have done that," continued Sanco, "meet me and the Misters Sligo at the stable, where they are in the loft, asleep."

"A good sign, masters! for if a man can sleep well in the midst of danger, it shows all right at heart," as the faithful servant gently tapped each upon the

shoulder, and as each gentleman sprung from their bed.

"We ought to sleep well, Sanco," replied Hyne, "when we have so faithful and kind a watchman over us as you are."

"I thank you, master, for your good opinion," returned Sanco. "I never wish any watch-tour of mine to be more pleasant than the present one is to me. But there are dangers ahead for you to encounter, and if," continued Sanco, "I ever watch over you again, it may be in more pain and anxiety than in my present duty of that kind."

Thus saying, he took their saddle-bags and holsters, when lightly retracing his steps from their room, was soon at the stable, followed shortly after by the gentlemen from their domicil, who were soon also at their post, according to order of, reader, I need not tell you who.

At twelve o'clock the ladies, dressed in the costume heretofore mentioned, made their appearance upon the balcony, accompanied by their faithful servant maid, Sally, who, cautiously lowering their means of descent, and fastening the upper ends of the ladder to the post of the piazza, shook hands with them, and one after the other of the ladies were shortly after in safety upon the ground. That done, the servant, by means of another rope, lowered their baggage, when, in the next moment, our ladies being their own porters, seized their valises, and were soon out of the mansion, and being joined by the young Sligos, were on their way either to be commanded, or to assume pantomimic control of the captives led captive.

As a natural consequence, as long as their maid

servant could see them, they were gazed upon with anxious hope—then drawing up the ladder, unfastened it, and with it, in her possession, returned to her bed unnoticed.

Upon the arrival of the ladies at the cedar thicket mentioned, they found the gentlemen in readiness to attend them. Sanco, at a few steps distant, having hold of the bridle-reins of each horse, the two Sligos took theirs, and the gentlemen a hold of theirs, while Sanco, still holding the ladies' horses, the young Sligos fastened the valises of their fair charges to the hind part of the gentlemen's saddles. Here the ladies went to where their horses were, and then returned to the gentlemen.

At that arrangement, those of the party who could, and perhaps my readers may here allow me the privilege to add, *dare* give utterance to their thoughts were all wrapped in profound silence. Here one of the ladies giving a sign to Sanco, he advanced and spreading his cloak before them, they both kneeling upon it, were for some minutes engaged in prayer.

While the ladies were engaged at their mute, yet sincere devotion before *Him* who sees and knows the thoughts of all, and in earnest solicitation for their protection, Hyne discovered their horses had been left unattended, and calling the attention of Sanco to it, without returning to them, he replied in a low tone of voice, "Ah, master! be not alarmed at that, Gallant and Swift know their mistresses are here, and though unattended, are too well accustomed to the command of their owners to move from where they are standing till mounted by Miss Ellen and Miss Susan."

By the time Sanco had finished his remarks, the

ladies had finished their invocation, and rising, made signs to the gentlemen, that they were ready for departure. At that signal, Sanco, speaking to the horses, they came to where the ladies were standing, when tapping their knees with a slight touch of the riding-whip, the noble animals, understanding the signals, were instantly on their knees before their well-known riders, who in the next moment were on their backs.

None were present to give the adieu to but *one*, and he taking their hands, with a tear in his eye, that glistened as the light of the moon reflected upon his honest countenance, and each bowed the adieu to him, and soon the party was on its way through the mountain.

One of their routes among others, necessary on their journey, led over the "Pebble Peak," and when they had arrived at the spot where, at a time long since passed, the dead had been deposited, the ladies halted and gazed for a few minutes upon the solemn scene. Then giving another signal they were soon out of sight of that hallowed spot, and far removed from the mansion and its comforts, were wanderers amidst the defiles of lofty mountains.

Such is the devotion of woman's heart to man! Why is it not better reciprocated?

That night our party travelled but a short distance before the guides, knowing well their duty, halted at the door of a backwoodsman's hut, with whom they were personally acquainted, and where they arrived about daylight the next morning, and continued there until the night of that day should arrive.

At that humble abode, more pleasant on that occa-

sion, and under the circumstances, than doubtless a palace would have been, deprived of their wishes as dearest hopes, the ladies were provided with and occupied a neat as comfortable separate apartment; and after partaking of a good breakfast retired for the purpose of sleep.

The gentlemen and their guides occupying another small apartment soon followed their example, while their horses were well attended to by their hospitable host.

Here, reader, according to my accustomed deference to you, I again, after repeated requests of a similar kind of you, ask your permission to leave our fugitives in your mind's keeping for the present, to return for a while to the Mansion and to the Mountain Inn.

Sanco had reached the Inn, and having gone to the stable, in accordance to instructions received, broke into atoms the lock of its door. That done, and retaining the key of it, he returned to the Inn, and safely locking each outer door of that establishment, laid himself down to take the balance of that night out in sleep.

The next morning the windows of the gentlemen's apartment were found open, and the entrance door of the library, at the mansion, unlocked.

Upon whom suspicion could rest save in the minds of those who were privy to the acts of the preceding night, no certainty could be arrived at. The faithful Sanco, true to the trust reposed in him, and in order to prevent pursuit as long as possible, devised and suggested all sorts of policy to that effect: so that and the next day were spent in going from neighbor to

neighbor in useless attempts to learn if the fugitives might not have passed that way.

Upon searching the rooms of the respective fugitives, the letter of the gentlemen to the ladies of the 24th of January was found in a drawer in Ellen and Susan's apartment. That, though not positive, was thought circumstantial evidence sufficient to, (in case they were overtaken before marriage had taken place between the two parties) predicate an arrest and imprisonment upon, and the next step resorted to by Urnsden, and in which he was sustained by the opinions of Melvin and Standly, was to send for and engage the assistance of Captain Nevelle and his company of *Regulators.* w

The aid just spoken of being obtained, Justee Catchpenny was forthwith sent for. This learned dignitary, more famed for charges and fees than that of legal knowledge, came, and upon his arrival at the mansion, made many *would-be-wise* as unnecessary inquiries. Then issuing his warrant of arrest, received the prime object of his visit there, viz.: *Thirty dollars*, and making a respectful bow, not so much out of concern for the persons present, as from a knowledge of his unexpected good fortune, withdrew.

The orders of the gentlemanly captain of the bandits were that day issued to his no less honorable command; and the following morning the search for, with the view of arrest of, the fugitive lovers, was entered upon.

The respective crossings of the river, as had been previously suggested, were the first objects attracting the attention of the command, but finding no signs nor traces of horse-tracks thereto, the search on those

routes was soon abandoned. At length one of the company was ordered to the stable of the Mountain Inn, from whence the tracks of six horses were traced to the pine thicket already spoken of. On his report, the whole company moved to the spot, from whence the tracks of the horses were trailed, till coming to a rocky and shallow ravine, that ran for several miles through a narrow vale, that lay between two large mountains, the tracks were lost sight of.

It was then near nightfall, and Captain Nevelle ordering four of his men to proceed, himself and Lieutenant Everett returned to the mansion, from whence they were to set out the next morning to join the company at a designated rendezvous east of the mountains.

Our travellers had profited by the delays at the mansion, and getting much the start of their anticipated pursuers, were approaching in safety a thickly settled part of the country. One night, the last preceding the one of their arrival at the town of ********, and as they were about commencing a descent of the last mountain, terminating at the commencement of a beautiful as wide, extensive, rich and tastily cultivated section of country, their guides being some eighty or a hundred yards in front, were stopped by a party of six mounted men, who at that time had come to a path meeting at angles on and intersecting the one intended by the guides.

At that moment a cloud, that had for some half hour before obscured its light, passed from between the moon and our travellers, and, as if desirous of affording light in the hour of danger to the benighted fugitives, its mild as placid rays were displayed; and

all animate, as inanimate, nature was in full view around them.

The guides had not yet attained the point of intersection before the word *halt* was heard as emanating from one of the six men at that time occupying the pass, where they had already formed a direct line, the front facing that of the guides in their advance.

When the guides had advanced to within a few paces distant from the line spoken of, one of that company advanced to the centre of the column, and ordering them to stop, a short conversation ensued between them and the person in question.

At that instant our lovers also formed a line, the ladies placing themselves between the two gentlemen, and in full view of affairs going on in front of them.

Here Laurence was in the act of advancing, when Ellen, perceiving his intention, gave him a signal to remain in his position and await the report to himself and Hyne of the elder Sligo. The result proved the correctness of her judgment, for in a few minutes after, the two commanders, as they supposed, of the company, rode, accompanied by the guides, to where the ladies and gentlemen were.

The exterior costume of the officers was not as valuable as (if I may be allowed the application) that of their interior.

The latter displaying an excellence of texture interspersed with a brilliancy rarely met with, while its suavity and graceful appearance betokened the forms from whence it emanated to be those of gentlemen. The external appearance of each was neat and genteel, and their persons were rendered comfortable by a thick overcoat, buttoned around them to their chins;

while on the front part of their hats was worn a rich plume, fastened at its base by large gold clasps, embossed with a number of precious stones, the brilliancy of which were finely displayed from the reflection of the Queen of Night upon them.

Before the officers spoken of left their positions, the white flag of truce, borne by the junior in command, was seen hoisted and waving in the air at a respectful height above his head. That done, they slowly advanced to a spot about five steps from where our travellers with their guides were then stationed.

Here a momentary silence was observed, when one of the officers, addressing Laurence and Hyne, pointing to it as he did so, said,

"Gentlemen, that flag is the emblem of present peace with me, and as long as it maintains its position, know that you and your party are safe, and in no danger whatever. It becomes my duty, however, to inform you upon this occasion, that you behold in me the chief of a company of bandits that infest these mountains, and that our object is plunder, without regard to rank, condition or sex. You and your party are all alike in my power, and I must here demand of you—from whence you have come? your object? your place of destination? and the amount, whatever it may be, of gold, silver and jewelry in yours and your party's possession? That course taken by you, of immediate compliance, may, in the end, procure your release from the fate now awaiting you and those of the company you seem to be the protectors of. For your answers and compliance with my demands," continued the robber, "I shall wait a

respectful time, and shall, for the present, return to my command."

At that the officers wheeled their horses, and in the next minute the flag waved in front of their command.

The present was a momentous time with our travellers. The demands of the captain of the bandits were imperative; as also was their obligation to protect, as on a former occasion they said they would do, their *fair charge*. And how then to act, involved much thought and mature consideration, under circumstances present and least expected.

"How now, Sam?" said Laurence to Hyne, as the two officers went from them in a swift gallop, and placed themselves at the head of their command. "As for our money and effects, they are nothing, on such occasions as the present represents, to lose, but *trash*. But to lose those for whom our lives are already pledged, is what I can neither bear nor think of tolerating, till I shall cease to exist; and they, if need, must be taken over my corpse. The bandits," continued Laurence, "are, from present appearances, six to four of us in number, and, as is their trade, fight more for that which lines the coffers of many unworthy men, than in defence of virtue and innocence. The ladies must be protected, come what may, and followed by whatever circumstances. To tell," continued Laurence, "where we are from, who we are, and what our object and destination, might be attended with more pernicious consequences than at once to fight in that of the ladies and our defence; for, if the demands of the commander of that band of robbers are complied with, it will be death only to us at last,

with this difference—that it will be two instead of one. First, if obedient to the demands of their captain, the ladies may also be taken from us; and, in the second place, we will be murdered, with a view to prevent suspicion. What say you, at this view of our situation," continued Laurence, "to a refusal of that captain's demands, and our preparation for and commencement of hostilities!"

The argument of Laurence was readily concurred in by Hyne. The fiery vehemence of youth was kindled to its hottest fervency in the bosoms of our lovers, and their next object was the safety of the ladies during their continuance of the determined upon combat.

For the purpose of devising some plan of safety to the ladies, the gentlemen had dismounted, and making signs requesting them to do so, in the next moment all their party was on the ground.

Here, the elder Sligo being better acquainted with giving expeditious signs, upon explanation to the ladies than their lovers were—he was ordered to explain the dilemma in which they were placed, and to request in the names of the gentlemen—their agreement to the then anticipated combat.

With that calmness and composure often met with in the opposite sex, amidst danger; and, that so eminently displays the virtue with which nature's God has ordered them, our ladies were strictly attentive to the pantomimic explanations then being made them of the check of their peaceful progress. And, when asked by signs given, if they would give their consent to the preparations for and defence spoken of,

they, in the person of Ellen alone, and through their interpreter, Sligo, to Laurence, replied:—

"What we have done is from our own free-will and choice. The present ill is one among many we expect to meet with through life, and which, it appears, we could neither foresee or avoid. Our act of elopement with you has, perhaps, brought upon us, the indignation of those to whom we are, by birth, near, and may, probably, rest upon us as a stain, in the opinions of those whose weakness of intellect too often brings them to think, *nothing right that is above their own capacities*. For that class of beings we entertain a *sympathy* not *merited*, yet bestowed upon them by us, in charity. With regard to yourself and Mr. Hyne," continued Ellen, "it is for your sakes that we are here; for your sakes that we have, thus far, braved every danger, and in the present one, if necessary, that we will share with you every ill the present hour seems so pregnant with.

"Devise your plan," she continued, "and we with you will place ourselves under an *Omnipotence* for safety."

Just at the time that Laurence had received the pantomimic reply of Ellen, three other men were discovered to have joined the company of bandits, and as they then numbered nine to four, the hope of success in a victorious escape had begun to fail in the bosoms of our two lovers.

That acquisition to the number of bandits was noticed by the ladies, and quick of comprehension, as they were of sight, a short signalled conference ensued between them, when Ellen beckoned to Sligo to attend

her, conveyed through his interpretation the following additional remarks to Laurence.

"We have seen, with regret, the increase to the number of bandits, who, a few moments ago, we had thought your gallantry and bravery equal to. That opinion is now changed—not on account of a want of confidence in your skill and management of yours and our defence, but owing, entirely, to the more than double force opposed. With this view of our condition, Susan and myself advise a parley with the leader of the bandits, which may, perhaps, bring about an honorable as safe escape from them, and influence of their present power over us. In this act on your parts," continued Ellen, "we would recommend, with due deference to your better opinions, a surrender into the hands of their Captain all, if necessary, of the personal effects of our party. If," continued she, "from this spot we may even have to walk in the completion of our purposes, to the settlements, you can there apprise your fathers of your respective situations, and while waiting for means to return to New York, that which is ever of more sterling worth to man than gold and silver—*an honorable and gentlemanly deportment* are yours; the use of which will command respect from those who possess sense; while upon those to the reverse, you may look with more proud as compassionate sympathy than contempt," adding, "the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong."

What to do was now, a matter of more difficulty to arrive at than the hopes of success of their plans, previous to the reinforcement, had created a certainty of. To avoid as much as possible a show

of alarm, our party remounted, when Sligo, with a white pocket-handkerchief waving in one hand, was despatched, requesting the presence of the commandants.

During the absence of Sligo, a profound silence was observed, and in the meantime, our ladies lowering their veils, took their positions as before described. A valuable diamond pin rested upon the bosom of each one, while four elegant as massive bracelets encircled their wrists.

In a short time Sligo returned, and reporting the request granted, resumed the station formerly occupied by him. He had scarcely done so, before the officers, advancing to a distance of about five paces, halted in front of the line formed by the fugitive party.

Here a short pause again ensued, when the officer heretofore known to my readers as the Captain of the bandits, said to Laurence:

"Stranger, if properly informed, I am at your request before you for the purpose, doubtless, of receiving your answer and compliance with my demands?"

"Not, sir, in the entire," calmly replied Laurence.

"In what particular lies the difference between your views and those of my own of your case?" asked the Captain.

"In four out of five of your requirements of us," replied Laurence.

"Can you name the requisites demanded," returned the Captain.

"You certainly have not forgotten them, but be that as it may, I can," replied Laurence.

"Do so," said the Captain.

"They are: From whence we come? our objects? place of destination? silver, gold and jewelry in our possession? and lastly, from its inference, the probability of our party being made prisoners and put to death by your order?"

"The first, second, third and fifth of your demands," continued Laurence, "are what we protest against. The fourth is *trash*, and in the present hour is looked upon as yours If," continued he, "there is one atom of honor yet lingering in that bosom of yours, long since a wreck of disreputable profession, I appeal to it for justice, in inducing you, upon the principles of generosity and humanity, strange as those feelings may be to you, to let them now in your power pass, more especially when two of them are *ladies*, whose persons are sacred while living, and which myself and my comrades are bound to protect at the expense of a flow of the last drop of blood in our veins."

"You are rather insolent than otherwise, as a supplicant," replied the Captain, cooly.

"To base oppression it may appear so, sir, but to the truly honorable, never!" replied Laurence.

"More, instead of less insolence! and for which you may (at a time better productive of convenience to me than the present one) have to account," said the Captain. "It is," he continued, "not often, and particularly under such circumstances as the present represents, that any requests are ever granted by me. To that rule the case now presented shall be an exception. I have heard," continued the robber, "your protest and will now listen to your proposals for yours and the ransom of your party."

"The semblance of generosity," replied Laurence, "which appears in the latter part of your remarks, sir, inspires me with greater respect for you than other portions of it justify me in entertaining. However, in the words of the more learned and better judge of men than either you or me, I shall for the present think no more of it, and shall only add, that, 'In such a time as this, it is not meet that every offence shall bear its comment,' and avail myself of your willingness to hear my proposals for a parley."

The officer gracefully bowed his approval of the compliment conferred and smiling, replied, "I like bravery and honor—they are allies—they fit me well, and when reminded of them so forcibly, as on this occasion they have been developed by you, I cannot but own their influence, though the impetus to it be given by an enemy. We," continued the officer, "will settle the insults mutually given to one another, at a more remote period, and one less cumbersome than the present one is to you."

"Here," advancing to where Laurence was, and extending it as he spoke, "is my hand, in testimony of what I have just said. You and your party are free, and may continue your pass through the mountains unmolested, consequent upon your being the attendant of ladies; but" continued the officer, "if ever the time comes, *mark my words*, that we meet again upon those mountains, there will be an attempt, on my own, as well, doubtless, on your part, to have the insults settled that have passed between us this night. A few moments more," continued the Captain, "and I shall detain you no longer. In your route and where you may, probably, arrive at some time to-night, stands, at a short dis-

tance from the winding pathway, terminating at the commencement of the valley—a house, occupied by one of my command and his family, under the pretext of 'Tavern-keepers.' That house is the rendezous of many, who, like me, live upon the spoils clandestinely taken from others, and where you will most likely be in eminent danger. My honor," continued the Robber, "has been pledged for your safety—and my gallantry, if such a spirit I may claim to possess, must be added and exercised for yours and your party's protection."

Here the officer unbuttoned his great coat, and followed in the act by his no less gentlemanly companion, took from around their necks a massive gold chain, from each of which was suspended an elegant "signet." "These articles," continued he, "will insure the safety of your persons and property, wherever and whenever seen. By your permission, sir," addressing Laurence, continued the Robber, "I claim the honor of placing them around the necks of the ladies present, to be returned to me, if ever I meet with them again, and if not, to be kept by them as a token of the high regard in which they and their sex are held by a robber."

When the Captain had finished his remarks, and waiting for a reply from, Laurence said, "I and my party feel grateful for the care and concern you manifest for our safety, and regret, sir, the momentary delay which must unavoidably take place, before conferring your passport upon us, through that esteem in which the opposite of our sex are held by you. Both of the ladies," continued Laurence, "are *deaf and dumb*, and if you will allow me a few moments, they shall be apprized of your kind intentions."

"Certainly, sir," was the reply.

Here Sligo was ordered to confer with them, and in a few minutes after, our ladies, leaving the line, rode to where the officers were, when the chains were placed as spoken of, and in a few moments after, the adieu being passed, the commander of the bandits and his men, soon disappeared.

When one trouble is over and another spoken of, as likely to ensue, the reflections on the past, and thoughts upon that anticipated, are alike unpleasant, as they are opposed to an ease of mind. Such was the condition of the mental faculties of our travellers; and under such impressions, they passed their lonely, as now unobstructed route till they had arrived at the eastern descent of the mountains. At that point, about five miles distant from the house spoken of by the Robber.

As the descent was a steep one, and traced through a narrow defile, the party was compelled in some places, to dismount, while in single file, each one leading his horse, they followed, one after the other, with slow and cautious steps.

At about half-way the distance from the top to the foot of the mountain, and on a spur, separated from the spot then occupied by our party, by an impassable and deep hollow, was discovered several persons on horseback, and one of them hailing Sligo, demanded of him, "Who he and his party were? Where they were bound? and if friends to the house below?"

Sligo understanding his duty, replied, "We are strangers, travelling from the west to the east; knowing no one, and friends to all who will treat us as such."

"You answer boldly, and know not to whom you speak. I will see to it," replied the man.

The moment the spokesman had ended his speech, he and his party disappeared from the spur of the mountain occupied by them, when our travellers resumed their winding as difficult way down the mountain.

At length, and at about one o'clock in the morning, the fugitives arrived at a spot from which they had a full view of the "*Tavern*" spoken of. A dim light was discovered in the distance, emanating from a lantern suspended from the end of a pole rafter, that aided in the support of a clapboard roof of a large-sized double cabin. Beacon-like, the lantern was steady, as if to attract the attention of, and induced the weary and benighted traveller to seek shelter and rest there. Not, however, to receive and partake of the rights of hospitality there, but as the first step, innocently taken, towards violation, plunder and murder!

At sight of the cabin a short pause to their progress ensued, occupied by consultation upon the propriety of stopping there for the remainder of the night, or to proceed to the next house, about ten miles off, and which was the next preceding their arrival at the town of ———, where they had calculated upon being out of the reach of danger from their pursuers.

The fatigue of the ladies—their want of refreshment and sleep in the last several nights previous—and the desire of relief from the excitement thus far of that night, induced the gentlemen to avail themselves of a chance for the latter at the "*Tavern;*" and

leaving their long trodden pathway, they were soon at the door of a miserable excuse for one.

The moon had now gradually descended behind the lofty mountains that our travellers had just crossed, the last one of in their route, and as if to say—as the placid serenity of her last rays were cast upon them—"Rest here in peace, for I can light you no longer on your way to-night, but will, if necessary, lend my aid at night to-morrow." Then all was darkness, except the light afforded by the twinkling stars as nightly they afford their glittering array on things during nature's silent hours.

The two Sligo's being in front on their arrival at the house, and one of them knocking at its door, was answered from within by a guttural, surly voice, in the expression of—

"Who disturbs the sleep of honest people at this late hour?"

"Coming, sir," he continued, as the second rap was made.

In a few moments the door was opened, when a grim looking animal, in the shape of man, made his appearance, with a lighted candle in his hand; and, with just about as much indifference to the necessities of others as he was a stranger to the feelings of friendship, addressing Laurence, said:

"The rule at the 'Take-in House,' is, to admit no traveller, without he pays a threefold price, when he comes to it after the hour of twelve o'clock at night; besides, my house is now full of *known gentlemen*, who I cannot disfurnish for the few hours' accommodation of wandering stragglers. However," he continued, "if my terms are acceptable, you may come in."

"You are kind, Mr. Take-in," replied Laurence. We accept of your terms, and will take them for—what they may be worth."

In a little time the party was dismounted, and the ladies, taking each an arm of the gentlemen, were conducted into a small room occupied by the proprietor of the "Take-in House" and his family, where they were for a few moments left alone, and the time they were so was occupied by the gentlemen bringing in their baggage, while the two Sligo's, with the landlord, were employed at the stable, with their horses.

Here and there was seen straw beds, lying foot to foot, upon the floor, while each one seemed occupied by *double tenancy;* all not so much after the matter of *fee-simple* right as at *will* from subsequent events.

The ladies occupied each a three-legged stool, upon which they had been left by the gentlemen, near the fire-place, where were the remains of what, in the early part of that night, might have been taken for a comfortable fire.

The signets bestowed upon the ladies, had been placed by the gallant captain between their riding-habits and their usual costumes, so that no ornaments or valuables were visible about them, save their bracelets and breastpins.

"Necessity is said to be the mother of invention, George," said Hyne to Laurence, as, in placing their saddle-bags and the valises with their holsters close by, alongside of the seats occupied by the ladies, they took seats upon them.

Just at that time, our renowned host of the "Take-in House," accompanied by the Sligos, entered the room, when one of the latter perceiving the position occu-

pied by Laurence and Hyne, said, "Myself and my brother will profit by your example, gentlemen;" when, in the next moment, getting at a vacant spot near the existence of, but not *warmth* of, the fire, they then also seated themselves upon their saddle-bags.

> "An unforseen necessity impelled the measure,
> And safety sanctioned it."

In a few moments after our travellers had become seated, and while our host was yet in a standing posture, with one foot upon a straw-bed and another upon the naked floor, two men making their appearance, requested him to walk to the door.

While the landlord and the two men were in earnest, as rather enraged, conversation, the expression was overheard of, "Such a chance as this is, is not often ours; we will not sleep till the work is done! The captain will not be here to night—it is past his hour. He knows nothing of these people, or else his signet would be upon them. We can murder, conceal their bodies, and divide what they may have between us, as so much clear gain, and our lady-protecting captain be none the wiser of it. Will you agree to what I have said?" continued the speaker.

"I will," replied the assassin-like host of the Take-in House.

When the landlord returned to the room, Laurence asked, "If he and his party could get something to eat, places to sleep, and a separate apartment for the ladies?"

The animal replied, "All the places you can get, you now have, and for something to eat, that cannot be furnished here."

"Is this, then," continued Laurence, "the kind of fare which we have to pay three prices each?"

"Yes," in a surly tone, replied the host. "And," continued he, "you may think yourselves lucky if you get off from here in the morning with three prices for each head of you."

"What do you mean?" continued Laurence.

"Oh, nothing," recollecting himself, replied the animal, "it is only a way I have of speaking."

At that moment another call for his attention was being made, and our host hurrying from them, the travellers were left to their undisturbed reflections.

Not being where they could speak but in a whisper, which had then become necessary, for fear of being overheard by some one or more of the bed tenantry, alternate communications were made between the four males of our travellers, in which Sligo was ordered to give signs to the ladies of what was going on, of the danger the party was in, and of the necessity there was of exhibiting the signets. The ladies immediately complied, and in the next minute, the signets, gracefully suspended, were seen resting upon their bosoms.

To the surprise of the party, and in the next moment, sprang to his feet, from one of the straw beds, a tall and meagre looking fellow, with a pair of socks on his feet, and his pants fastened over his shirt by a leather belt. Taking three steps from where he was, the door was quickly opened, and as soon slammed to, when all again was still, and the eyes of the balance of the bed tenants peeping from under their respective coverings, were instantly fixed upon their nightly guests.

The man just spoken of had scarcely closed the

door before he was met by the host, his two confederates, and two others, on their way to the room he had left, for the purpose of assassination. Their plan was to offer the gentlemen and their guides, a glass of brandy and water, the spirit mixed in a bottle of prussic acid; and as for the ladies, their purpose was with them, strangulation.

"How now, Stub! what has made you rise so early? What's out now with you?" said the host, as from Stub's tall person and lengthy steps, the fellow in his hurry came forcibly against him.

"More is out than you know of," replied Stub; "and you'd better look out how you fool around these 'ere strangers."

"Pshaw, if you had half as much brains as you have length, you would not be so easily alarmed," replied our host.

"Let me have much or little brain," said Stub, "I know *one* thing, and that is, if you injure a single hair of the head of any of this party, the Captain will bring you to your senses with a vengeance."

"Fool!" cried another of the assassins; "the Captain knows nothing of what we are about to do, nor never will, for you know this is past his, or the Lieutenant's hour, either; and before they come here tomorrow night, we will have the bodies of these people securely deposited in a cold ground sweat-case, and their personal effects snugly placed beyond the knowledge or reach of the Captain."

"It is sometimes easier to talk of than to *do* things," replied Stub, "an' I say agin, you had better not fool with them strangers, for the Captain's signets is on the necks of them ladies."

"Well, what of that?" said our host. "If what you say is true, we have gone too far in our intentions to give them up now; but stay, boys," he continued, "I'll go in and see if Stubs tells the truth or a lie."

In a few moments the keeper of the "Take-in House," returned, and looking as if he had been "taken in," himself, and with a countenance exhibiting fear and alarm, said, "Stub tells the truth—the gold chains and signets are brightly shining upon the bosoms of the ladies, and if the Captain or the Lieutenant were now to step in, we would all feel like *singed rats* after a fire."

The host had scarcely finished his remarks before the sound of a bugle was heard, announcing the appearance of some one, well known at the "Take-in House."

The signal just heard caused a tremor in the "*would-be-brave-where-there-is-no-danger*," not much dissimilar to that spoken of, of the "dry-bones" in Holy Writ.

"There now!" said Stub, "you'll b'leive me the next, if your neck aint stretched this time—wont you?"

Our host had no time to reply to what Stub had asked him, for at that moment the Lieutenant of the bandits at the head of his command, made his appearance, and calling our host, said:—"Buford, are my apartments in order?"

"Yes, sir," was the reply.

"Is supper ready," continued the officer.

"It is—and has been for the last three hours, sir," replied Buford, "and I have been waiting to know

whether you would have it in your ante-chamber or in the dining-room?"

"In the dining-room," replied the Lieutenant, as he and his command entered a magnificently furnished apartment.

They had not been there long before the Lieutenant wishing to give Buford some other orders, stepped into the room known to my readers, as being famous for its number and sort of beds, and from one of which, Stub had suddenly risen.

There, to his astonishment and mortification, he discovered the travellers seated as before described, and the ladies worn out with fatigue, seen with their heads reclining on the shoulder of each gentleman in a profound sleep.

"Worse than brute! meanest of the mean! you deserve to be scarified with the blade of the smallest pen-knife—stuck with splinters of the richest pine and then burned to death, for your villanous purposes and neglect of duty. I'll see to it," said the Lieutenant to Buford. Then addressing the gentlemen, he said: "I am truly mortified at the orders of my commander being so badly complied with, by that (pointing to Buford) dog of a landlord; while, at this late hour, I claim the pleasure of extending to you and the ladies under your care, with those of your attendants, in the name of my Captain, the rites of hospitality now at my command."

Thus saying, the Lieutenant requested the ladies to be awakened and apprized of his wishes; which, being done, the whole party were soon ushered into the elegant apartment awhile since spoken of.

In a few minutes the gentlemen and their guides

partook of a glass of fine Jamaica spirits and water, and, at the solicitation of the gallant Lieutenant, the ladies pledged them in a glass of fine old Maderia. Next came a well served as palatable supper, which when over, the ladies, at the order given by the Lieutenant to the wife of Buford, retired from and entered a carpeted, well fitted-up and comfortable room for the night; when, for a like period, our gentlemen and their attendants occupied fine beds in one of the Lieutenant's rooms, while he slept in the adjoining one.

The following day, and after a repetition of the like hospitality shown them by the gallant stranger at the "Take-in House," our travellers were soon on their peaceful way again to the town of **********, where they arrived at about ten o'clock on the night of that day.

CHAPTER XL.

Like satellites moving around their more effulgent orbits;—the wealthy man has many sycophantic as lip-service friends, who, in adversity, run from him as if he were a pestilence; hence, if Holy Writ be true, wealth makes many friends in this, while poverty secures an unerring one in the next world.

THE ARREST AND IMPRISONMENT.

THE town of ****** was, at the time of which we are speaking, limited with regard to the number of its inhabitants, and considerably so, as is the case elsewhere, in this kind of *virtue, dictating the propriety of each attending to their own and letting that of the busi-*

ness of their neighbors alone. The true lady and the true gentlemen will ever do so, and it is that in fact, which so eminently distinguishes them from the pry, the gossip and the slanderer.

On the night of their arrival at the town spoken of, our party stopped at the "Eagle Hotel," a house much celebrated for politeness and attention shown to strangers. There a spacious and comfortable apartment was immediately furnished the ladies, and the gentlemen were not neglected in a like particular.

"Mistress," said a female servant, who, after attending to the ringing of a bell, returned forthwith to her, "I don't know what kind of people them ladies are, they won't speak, but make signs to me that I can't understand."

The good-natured dame taking from their resting-place of service, a pair of gold-framed spectacles, and wiping them with a clean linen handkerchief, put them into a case made of like material, placed it in a work basket, and rising from her chair,—herself and the servant soon found their way into the ladies' apartment.

Upon entering the room—that courtesy, ever the attendant of the well-educated and polished of both sexes, was displayed in the manner and deportment of the strangers, who immediately rising from their seats, as the old lady entered, one presented a chair, and made signs for her to be seated, which was done, and alongside of the lady who had offered the chair.

After some moments spent in that sort of confusion usual with those entering the presence of strangers, and whose manners are a little above that sphere to

which the less polished are accustomed; our lady of the Eagle Hotel, thinking that her guests might be hard of hearing, put her mouth to the ear of the lady, and elevating her voice to a pitch at which it had not been before, nor since, perhaps, bawled out, "My servant has told me that you make signs to her which she can't understand the meaning of. I have thought you deaf and dumb; have come to satisfy myself of it, and to know if I can understand what you want?"

A like indifference to the old lady's expressions were manifested to that before of the servants. "What's wanting, ladies?" And after an additional sign given and not comprehended, Susan, going to her valise, took from it her note book, and returning, wrote,

"We are both incapable from circumstances, of conveying our ideas by articulation, or that of hearing. Can you convey your communications on paper, Madam? if so, I will converse with you in writing.

The old lady being minus of that strength of the eye which had attended her oculars in years past, immediately thrust one hand into her pocket, then recollecting herself, dispatched Katy for her spectacles. They were soon at hand, when taking the book upon her lap, and laying it open upon a snow-white linen apron, covering the front part of a black silk gown, by the light of a candle that the servant had placed on a table near the ladies, the first thing she wrote, seemingly in the goodness of her heart, was,

"What a pity that two such fine-looking ladies as you are should be deaf and dumb."

In a few minutes afterwards the requests of the ladies were complied with. Among other items of

the prying order was an attempt made by the hostess to know the names of the ladies. "Where they were from? Where going? What their object? And who the young men were attending them?"

After reading the questions put to her, Susan placed her right fore-finger across her ruby lips, while her eyes mildly resting upon those of the old lady through her spectacles, conveyed the sign of, "That is no one's business but those it belongs to."

In a few moments our hostess of the "Eagle Hotel" left the apartment, and soon our ladies retired to that of which they were not only much in need, but which they were considerably indisposed for, the want of, sleep.

The gentlemen were subjected to a like inquisitorial course from their loquacious landlord, who, like one of those spoken of by Mr. Jefferson in his "Notes on Virginia," think it no harm, but exceedingly polite and betokening the gentleman, to go through all—even descending into the most minute details of inquiry upon every man's business they may chance to meet with. Of that class of beings was our landlord, so that, strangers as they were and far from their native homes, there was little appearance of any thing like kindness and friendship being extended to them except so far only as the dollars in their possession warranted the manifestation of.

Misfortunes are rarely, if ever, singled-handed. The indisposition of the ladies increased, and for several days compelled to undergo medical treatment, they were unable to leave their beds, and thus deprived of that invaluable requisite to pleasure, health. Were among strangers, much in want of that kind of society

confidential, so peculiarly necessary in their then situations.

Attentions are often disagreeable as painful; and of that class were those shown our ladies by their hostess, who, when she was even in what she thought benevolent acts towards the strangers, would often place them in a fever from her annoying written inquiries, as much as to say, "The laborer is worthy of his hire," and my charge for services rendered, is to know who you are? What you are? Where you are from? Where going? And what your business here? Added to that, was whether they would or would not have them? their room was, at the special request of the hostess, usually crowded by their own sex, more from idle curiosity than an intrinsic good, whose remarks of, and comments upon the *deaf and dumb* were as distinctly heard as understood by those who had taken upon themselves that appearance, which, at the time we are speaking of, was a blessing in disguise, as it relieved our strangers of the trouble of replying to idle as unmeaning inquiry.

Like the north-west wind on a winter's night, passes through the crevices of every poor man's house, the news of the two deaf and dumb female strangers, accompanied by two equally strange men, with two white servants, was soon in the mouths of gossips seen industriously travelling the little town in every direction, to give the occurrence publicity. Knowing nothing of them but that they were strangers, the ladies were traduced and spoken of in all sorts of ways. And for what? Merely because they did not think fit to inform that class of beings, more busy with the affairs of others than that of their own, who

they were? Where they came from? What their business, and where they were going?

The celebrated "Take-in House" from which our travellers had a few days before made a fortunate as lucky escape, was even more tolerable with them than was now their condition at the more fashionable, and certainly more comfortable "Eagle Hotel."

The time, however, was then fast approaching, when every thing so desirable to be known, should be, in spite of all the precautions made use of by our party, developed for the use and benefit of the various mental appetites of that order of beings of both sexes, of which we have been speaking.

It is easy to bear prosperity, because it floats, as it were, upon the breeze, and is constantly studded by countless millions ready to bow with equivalents to devotion at the shrine of those who have arrived at the possession of wealth! While adversity is—like the gates of Gaza would be upon the shoulders of a modern Sampson,—hard to carry! Hence it is, that we see so many towering intellects giving way to the influence of the latter,—and but few, if any, to the former,—extending to them, however meritorious and beneficial they may formerly have been, the hand of aid and offer of assistance; but, reader, excuse this indulgence of thought upon what we think you will say is the truth! We have not forgotten our promise to you, and will proceed.

Our ladies had now become convalescent, and the purposes had in view and to be put in effect at their arrival at the town of * * * * * * * * * * were being made preparations for by those whose proper business it was to have them performed.

The gentlemen had ventured it, and so they had found it to be, on speaking to a reverend gentleman of the village;

> One who, like themselves, attending to his own,
> Left that of the business of others alone,

and moreover, a man of few words, still tongue and a good heart! That gentleman was to make his appearance at the hotel at eight o'clock on the following evening, for, reader, as we have on a former occasion said, *we need not tell you what.*

The night preceding that looked-for happy event, two gentlemen, strangers, arrived in the town, and describing the fugitive party to a man they had spoken to in the street, found the description given, to be the strangers at the "Eagle Hotel." At this they asked the man for and were conducted to another house called "The Comfortable."

It was now nine o'clock at night, and the landlord being apprized by the strangers of their business, the sheriff, who lived a few doors distant, was sent for, and was soon at their command.

The following morning, just after they had breakfasted, thrown their cloaks round them, and on the piazza with a view of taking a walk, the sheriff and his deputy being in their rear, stepped to where they were, and tapping Lawrence and Hyne at one and the same time upon the shoulders of each, proclaimed them prisoners, upon the warrant issued by our celebrated limb of the law, formerly spoken of, and immediately divested them of a brace of small pistols, found in the breast-pockets of their dress-coats. That done, they

were forthwith taken to a lawyer's office near, where two justices of the peace presided on their cases.

At that time, one of the young "Millers," accompanied by Standly made their appearance in the presence of the court, alleging upon oath, as authorized representatives of Urnsden, the crimes committed by the accused of having unlawfully taken from his house and protection, and retaining the same in their possession, his two daughters, Ellen and Susan; praying the court to take such steps in the cases before it, as the law made and provided in such offences justified it in doing.

Upon that occasion, among other proofs offered upon the alleged outrage, was the letter, already before my readers, of 24th of January, which was read and admitted by the court as evidence against the accused.

After some warmth on the part of the prosecution and no one to be procured by *fee*, nor out of humanity, on the parts of the defence,—the offence was adjudged a breach of trust, and of course—a bailable one, in default of which the offenders were committed, with the additional instructions of the court, that they should be taken under a sufficient guard, and at a short subsequent period, to the jail of the county, in which the offence had been committed, for trial.

At judgment being pronounced, and after a fruitless attempt to procure bail in the enormous sum of *ten thousand dollars each*, for the appearance at the court of the county spoken of, our young gentlemen made application and an appeal to the generosity of Standly, who their fathers had started in business in the city of New York, and who had then become wealthy, to join them and some others, at his own instance, in a bail-bond. Judas-like, Standly betrayed the confi-

dence of his benefactors!—suffered their sons to be imprisoned—and at that time told them that their conduct had long since dropped them from the ties of parental affection.

At the moment Standly had finished his ungrateful reply, and at a time when it had brought upon the young men the look from every direction of sneering contempt and abusive remarks, the reverend gentleman who was that evening to have consummated the happiness of his stranger friend, and had heard from the foul aspersions of babbling gossips the dilemma in which his young and but limited acquaintance had been placed, entered the court-room.

With that pre-eminence of soul ever so eminently portraying the line of distinction between the virtuously good and the grovelling of human nature, he asked of the court "The amount of bail required?"

On being told it, he asked, "Can I be allowed to confer privately with the two accused?"

The Court replied, "that that could not be permitted but in presence of an officer. In a few moments he, accompanied by the young gentlemen and the sheriff, entered an adjoining room.

Unceremonious, and with that cordiality of feeling and expression natural to the truly friendly, addressing Laurence and Hyne, the clergyman said:

"From what I have heard, I felt a desire to satisfy myself in, and finding you, as reported to be, arrested, in trouble, and without friends, have come to offer anything within my reach and control, serving your present as urgent wants."

The gentlemen expressed as they felt their gratitude for the exhibit in the Parson of man's most

brilliant gem, benevolence, and in a few moments the conversation became general between them upon the subject of procuring bail, and the release of the young gentlemen from prison. Many suggestions were made, but which, upon analysis were found inadequate to the purposes in view. The clergyman was in possession of a sufficiency of that class of funds amply requisite to insure for himself an inheritance in that "bourne from which no traveller returns," but with regard to the kind required in the present emergency—*gold and silver—he was weighed and found wanting.*

In the continuation of the Parson's remarks, he said: "I have heard it stated that your fathers are merchants in the City of New York; if so, there are gentlemen of that profession here who purchase their goods there, and some among them may be creditors of the house of 'Laurence & Hyne;' that being the case, they may be prevailed upon to become your bondsmen."

"Your kindness, sir," returned Laurence, "is what we could neither have looked for nor expected, and at such an hour as the present one is to us, is calculated under the extremes, of want and friendship, to rivet for you our highest sense of gratitude and determined intent, if ever the time may arrive to reciprocate it."

"The present," replied the doctor of souls, "is not the time to speak of reciprocity, but one wherein 'the word must be suited to the action, and the action to the word.'"

Here the names of the merchants of the village were called over, when, at the mention of the firm of Long

& Buford, the gloom that had so densely settled upon the countenances of the prisoners, was quickly dispelled, and their eyes sparkling under the influence of the lucid ray of hope then passing in their imagination. At one and the same moment, both making use of the same expression, said to the clergyman,

"You have hit it."

At that, Laurence requested their friend to get him a sheet of paper, pen and ink. Their friend did as he was requested to do, when the following letter was written and signed by the young men.

"*Under arrest*, ———, *Va.*, *February 3d*, 1802.

"Messrs. Long & Buford,—

"Gentlemen,—Travellers in your State for some time, we have spent two months of it in one of your most remote counties, where we purposed remaining till the present inclement season, or, in other words, the winter should give place to the more mild and pleasant influence of a spring atmosphere.

"Within the period alluded to, that passion, incident to all but, perhaps, the stoic, became for the first time ours. Its influence being encouraged and reciprocated by those we desired it should be, their hearts were asked for and obtained. A promise of marriage ensued; the application for its fulfilment to the parents of the ladies, (here strangers, as we also are,) being denied, an elopement was the consequence, and for which we are now under arrest, to be imprisoned unless we obtain bail for the alleged offence.

"Upon the principle of *favors received*, not from us, but from our fathers—we appeal to your feeling of generosity, and cast ourselves upon your friendship.

"Ten years since we remember to have seen both of you at the mercantile house, or in other words, firm of Laurence & Hyne, in the city of New York, whose sons we are. At that period, you were both in indigent circumstances, as well as strangers to the firm, notwithstanding, you 'asked, and it was given unto you.'

"An amount of ten thousand dollars was extended to your credit, and by repetitions of a like nature yearly, you are now, not only wealthy, but men of indisputable credit in the city that gave us birth.

"A knowledge of the facts instanced, have induced us in the hour of distress, want and necessity, to ask the loan—not of your money—but, of your names.

"Our worthy, and not until very recently known friend as gentleman, the Rev. Mr. Clermont, has informed us of your being in business here, and it is to his friendship only, that we are gratefully indebted for the conveyance of this letter to you. He is conversant with our history, and to him we refer you, till we shall have the pleasure of meeting yourselves. A prison may be ours to receive you in, before that pleasure is ours, as our stay at the place we now are is a thing entirely within the breast of the court.

"We are, dear sirs,

"Very resp'y,

"Yours,

"GEO. L. LAURERCE,

"SAM'L L. HYNE."

"To Messrs. Long & Buford, Merchants.

"Present."

At the reading aloud, as compelled to do, of their letter, it was placed in the hands of the learned divine, when the four re-entered the court-room.

It was now at a late hour, and, as was anticipated, the court adjourned, and the prisoners, under control of the sheriff, were taken to jail, followed there as if they had committed a score of murders, by idle curiosity, in an unfeeling crowd.

The next morning, Standly and Miller, exercising the prerogative vested in them, instructed the female portion of our fugitive party to prepare for a departure from the village, and return to the home they had left. On reading the decree of the court, the ladies penned a request, to have an interview with the prisoners previous to the departure then ordered. That request, after some hesitation between their new escort, was reluctantly granted, and even then upon condition that they, Miller and Standly, should be present at that interview.

The following morning to that in which the ladies had received their instructions, they repaired to the prison, and, as if they were also culprits, the intent gaze of many of their own, as well as that of the opposite sex, was fixed upon them, by which to gain occular supplies of gossip material.

On entering the prison, that sort most impressive of all contempt — viz., silent — was strictly observed toward Standly and Miller, while the prisoners directed their whole attention to written remarks and answers thereto from the ladies.

Said Ellen, in one of them: "The laws of our country have succeeded in separating our persons from each other, but it is beyond the reach of any

earthly power to do so, with regard to memory. This assertion time alone must, as it will, develope; and, for the purpose of impressing that truth where it is desired it should be stamped—upon your hearts —for what I write Susan ratifies—we claim the right as the pleasure of presenting these prayer-books," (holding them in her hands as Laurence read aloud,) "one to yourself, the other to Mr. Hyne—as mementos of the givers."

Here two elegant, well-bound, and gold-edged pocket prayer-books, were placed in the hand of each gentleman; and, in the next moment, Laurence, taking her note-book and pencil from Ellen, wrote as follows:—

"Ladies, by you these books are given,
To guide us in our paths to Heaven;
Now, next to it, in earthly bliss,
Are those whose hands have given this."

Then:—

"Farewell, dear maids, yet, where'er we be,
Our thoughts shall fondly be fixed on thee
One hour of absence to our bosoms prove,
No partings short, to they who truly love."

In a little time after Laurence had finished writing, the adieu was given, and the creaking of the massive doors, as they turned upon their hinges, announcing the signal of separation, the bolts within the locks confirmed it; when each one, engaged in thought, was again surveying, in silence, the return journey of the absent.

The morning following the interview spoken of, and

after an early breakfast, more to avoid the gratification of tattling, than their own physical appetites, our ladies set out for that home which they had some days before left, in the manner and under circumstances with which my readers are already familiar; but not with that pleasure and tranquillity of mind, attended by the accusers of their lovers, that they would have felt, had those they loved, and had left behind them, been present.

To loathe those who are present, and to love them who are absent, are two direct opposites, as they are powerfully operative principles in the human bosom. Hence, it may be inferred that the time occupied by the ladies in their return home, was to them particularly disagreeable, as their elopement had been fraught with the most elevated hopes, as, desire of happiness.

The days had now moved with all their slowly measured passings, upon fondly anticipated relief, and the fourteenth one gradually giving its light through the iron-bound gratings of their prison windows, when still no appearance of, nor intelligence from Long & Bufort had been seen or heard of. That, however, was not Clermont's fault, but those of whom he had been in search, and waiting the hourly expected return of both, from a business transaction in the country, at some distance from town.

On the morning of the fourteenth day of the imprisonment, Clermont repaired to the counting-room of Messrs. Long & Bufort, and finding them both in and disengaged, presented the letter of his two friends, after some preliminary remarks.

The letter was read by both—a few moments were

spent in that kind of silent indifference, usually displayed upon the countenances of those with whom avarice becomes a god, friendship but a name, gratitude a crime, and distress a scorn.

Clermont was too good a judge of mankind to be mistaken in the appearance of Long & Buford, to then suppose for a moment that the appeal of his friends to them for relief would be granted, and waiting till the merchants (to verify the remark contained in Holy Writ,) "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," would do so, he was much mortified to hear Long say, "We will not do it."

Here every argument in his power to effect a change in the *iron cased* decision he had just heard, was urged by Clermont; but to those he was speaking, his persuasive as impressive language was of no more use than the attempt to create fire upon ice, by the application of water.

"Then, gentlemen," continued Clermont, "you will for the sake of politeness, if from no other motive, answer the letter of the unfortunate applicants to your generosity, whereby to afford some sort of relief from the mortification of mind I feel, as their friend, at your refusal of aid in this, their time of distress and appeal to you for assistance."

"The answer to their letter, sir, will cost us but little trouble, compared with the unpleasantness we experience in listening to the warmth with which you advocate the cause of your prisoner friends, and here," continued Long, "let me inform you that it is only out of the respect entertained for their friend, that their letter would be at all noticed. It shall be answered."

"Now and by me?" asked the Clergyman.

"Yes," was the cold reply—and in a few moments after the following was written and signed by our merchants:

"* * * * * VA.

"*Feb'y* 17, 1802.

"TO MESSRS. GEO. L. LAURENCE,
"SAML. L. HYNE:

"Your letter under date the 3d instant, was handed us this morning by your friend, the Rev. Clermont. You are frank in the intelligence of your being sojourners in our State—of your attachments—your elopement with the objects of your affection—of your arrest for offence—of your being compelled to imprisonment, unless bail can be procured; and then, after calling our attention to the kindness, it is true, of your fathers to us, you ask our interference in your case, so far as to be your bondsmen. In reply to all of which you have apprized us, there is one thing only, we think proper to notice and that is, our opinions are that your love affairs have not been conducted with any regard to propriety, nor with that of sound discretion; consequently, the obligations of which you remind us to your fathers, are not of such natures as to induce us to become your bail; the result of which might be, the furnishing of the means for you to do worse instead of better.

"For the sake of the respect due to your fathers, we deprecate your condition, but no help can be afforded you by

"JAMES LONG.

"ROBERT BUFORD."

"And is this the reward of kindness bestowed?" said Clermont, after he had read, and yet holding in his hand the folded and then opened frigid epistle of the *purse proud animals*, who had now become indifferent to the obligations *due* as *payable* to their *benefactors*.

"It is not our practice—nor is it our business—nor have we even the inclination if time did permit it, to spend in argument upon what you have just asked us," resumed Long, "and the earlier you leave us now, the like earlier you will be enabled to visit the detected fugitives, and to tell them, that we will not interfere to save them from any portion of the punishment their imprudence dictates the suffering for."

"Were you a sensible man, sir, you would not speak thus to me; and the only palliation for your impudence and ignorance is—the compassion I entertain for you under the influence of both," replied Clermont.

At that the reverend gentleman, politely bowing, withdrew, and in the next hour was admitted (the jailor accompanying) to the presence of his two friends.

There is no analogy nearer the four legged animal, the name of which can be arrived at by the orthographical arrangement of three letters of the alphabet, than the man void of a sense of gratitude. The body of the first is all over covered with hair and bristles. Grunting, he moves; grunting, he eats, drinks and sleeps; grunting, rises from his wallow, and grunting he returns to it—without the least regard to the condition of his fellow animal. The latter has a body, likewise, susceptible of the growth of hair,

with the exception of the palms of the hands and soles of the feet.

When, therefore, man becomes ungrateful he is only a two legged ***, and grunting out his existence here, goes to a clime unknown, where he meets with an increase of the amount of debt, and where he learns the punishment due to the perpetrators of the most base of crimes. But reader, here as elsewhere, we have trespassed upon your kindness and indulgence, and again, asking your forgiveness, will proceed:

The interior of the prison room, in which our fugitives were confined, presented nothing to the sight nor imagination like that of comfort; on two sides of it, and projecting from the walls, were stone pillars of about eighteen inches diameter and two feet high, standing at equal distance of some three feet apart; these serving the purpose of seats, were barely touched by hanging chains, suspended from large iron bolts and rings, fastened in the wall. To the ends of the main chains were attached smaller ones, having to them manacles, for the better security of capital offenders against the ought-to-be-chaste doctrines of the law. A dim light reflected from small apertures at considerable height in the prison walls, was that alone by which to discriminate objects; while about mid-way of the opposite wall was a small as limited excuse for the comforts of fire. At one end of the room was a like miserable apology for water privileges, near which sat an empty earthen dish containing two knives and forks, all five of which articles seemed to have been long in the duty of serving criminals; and the *clean dirt* upon them

appeared to have been preserved as a sort of memento of the distinguished service to which they had been put, while upon its floor laid some three or four filthy, as long-in-service, blankets; to some, perhaps, who had risen from them for the last time, before being suspended between heaven and earth.

Upon those requisite as time honored servants, our young strangers were reclining, at the entry into their prison of their Rev. friend. At his entry the impulse of thoughts upon liberty, strengthened by an imagined Herculean anchor of hope, brought them erect, and seizing a hand each, of Clermont, welcomed his return to them.

CHAPTER XLI.

Time and circumstances are the indelible land-marks of the acts and motives of men—the former to conceive, the latter to develope all that nobleness of soul which his Maker designed him for—or to sink as far beneath the sphere, for which intended, as he is above the rest of animated nature.

"MR. JAILOR," said Laurence, after the reception of Clermont by himself and Hyne, "you are sensible of the fact that we have no means in our possession, by which to attempt, let alone effect, our escape from these walls. As for our friend, Mr. Clermont, you can search him and ascertain for yourself the truth of what I say—when convinced, I hope you will have politeness or sense enough to know, that your presence is neither agreeable nor needed here, and that the turn of that key now in your hand upon those who

are now before you, is sufficient to make you easy with regard to your responsibilities and care necessary to be taken of us."

At the remarks of Laurence, the stern countenance of the "turn-key" became serenely calm, and betokening traits of complaisance and benevolence to which his inward self had been long a stranger, he said, "Such men as you are and your fellow-prisoner—my key has never before turned upon—there is a something in your manners and deportment above my comprehension to describe, but which when seen and heard, softens the heart and makes the sensible stranger dear to the illiterate." Thus saying, he placed the key in the lock, moved back the bolt, drew the key, and soon outside, replaced and turning it again, our three friends were alone together for the first time since the arrest.

"The reply of that jailor to you," said Clermont to Laurence, "reminds me of the remarks of Xanthippus, who being asked, 'wherein the learned differed from the unlearned,' replied, 'send them naked to strangers and you will see.'"

"We are doubtless free? Have you brought the bond already drawn up and prepared for our signatures?" eagerly enquired Hyne, as the three sat upon a stone seat each.

"From the source you both have a right to expect, as I have anticipated it—there is a direct refusal, and myself as well as both of you insulted," replied Clermont. At my interview with those, whom circumstances ought to have instantly made your friends, I had like to have forgotten my position in this transitory life—and was near being provoked to do after the

manner of one of the olden time, in the case of Malchus—the sword of contempt, however, is with such men as Long and Buford, often better than that of steel. The latter," continued Clermont, "dispatches quickly, while the former, when conscience does its duty, keeps ever kindled in the bosom, a kind of mental hell with those who forsake their friends in the hour of need. Such are they of whom I have just spoken, and here (holding the letter in his hand as he expressed it) is a document that proves my words, regarding the ungrateful."

Here Clermont, placing the letter in the hands of those to whom it belonged, its contents were soon scanned by the prisoners, with that sort of feeling engendering scorn, contempt and pity. The first, for comment upon their love affairs; the next, for duplicity; and the last, for the want of soul manifested by its authors.

In a little time, it was determined upon to answer Long & Buford's letter, and, after some persuasion, Clermont was prevailed upon to be the bearer of it to the house of Long & Buford.

"Gentlemen," said Clermont, "I assure you that nothing but the esteem I entertain for you would induce me to meet, on business again, the clowns of whom we have not improperly been speaking; and let it be here perfectly understood, that it is for your sakes alone that I consent to and will do so."

At the consent sought for, Laurence, striking the prison door with a hand-cuff chain that reached it, the jailor soon entered, and being requested, furnished the prisoners with a make-shift for a small table, providing them also with pen, ink and paper, and a candle; then

withdrawing from their presence, the key was again turned, when the following was written:

"*Prison of* ——, *Virginia, Feb'y* 17, 1802.

"Messrs. LONG & BUFORD,—

"GENTLEMEN,—Yours of this date, in answer to ours of the 3d instant, is before us, and were it not for the feelings ever entertained by us of honor, and that urging in the most imperative terms the defence of ourselves and of our acts, against the aspersions of the illiberal and unjust, we would disdain to answer an epistle coming from the source or its like elsewhere, that yours has to us.

"Read that you may see! and reflect well upon it as emanating from us, in order that you may know (if it offends) to whom you may look for redress.

"And know, also, that though a prison now confines us, it will not always be so, and that we shall at some future time see you.

"To become offended at your refusal to befriend us, would be a direct tax upon good sense, and annoyance to that which we profess to be—gentlemen—the reverse of which appears prominently shown by you in meddling with that with which you have no business, and for the performance of by us, you have thought proper to predicate your refusal upon to aid us.

"Could we have been otherwise than frank in our letter to you?—it would have been a breach of honor, and a subversion of that integrity that ought to sustain a gentleman under all circumstances; but to speak of this to you, and such as you are, is like the throwing of 'pearls before swine.'

"Upon the subject of reciprocal favor and friend-

ship returned, with you it is like a wrecked vessel upon the boisterous ocean, which becoming calm, seems forgetful, as it were, of its turmoiled waves, as destructive waves that had pervaded it. You have been served, but to the offspring of those by whom you have become so—there is a direct denial. The excuse offered by you for this is too base for comment, and too low for further notice—as in your remarks the lie is indelibly prefixed to an impress of which you ought to be ashamed.

"He who presents this is our unchanged friend, the throb of whose heart in sincerity is what makes the difference between himself and you. His feelings have been injured in our behalf by you. Do so no more! but treat him with, if you know what it is, respect; or rely upon it that you account for the reverse to

"GEO. L. LAURENCE,
"SAM. L. HYNE."

Our prisoners had scarcely finished and read the contents of their letter to Clermont, ere their attention was drawn to the creaking of the massive iron-grated door as it turned upon its hinges. In a little time was heard a key applied to the lock from the outside of the inner-door, when the jailor, accompanied by Mercer, the keeper of the Eagle Hotel, entered their apartment. The former of the two making, what he, in his civilities shown, had long been a stranger to, a polite bow to our prisoners, and addressing them said, "It is not my wish to interrupt the private interview between you and Mr. Clermont, gentlemen, especially when I am convinced neither one nor the other of

you three would do any thing in that privacy which would endanger my responsibility as a public officer, nor the confidence I repose in you as gentlemen. And," continued the jailor, "why I have done so on the present occasion is, the urgent necessity to see you expressed to me by Mr. Mercer."

"You are complimentary, Mr. Jailor," returned Laurence; "and let me, as a stranger, inform you that the unexpected display of civility shown by you has, but in one solitary exception, and that is Mr. Clermont and family, caused a lenity from myself and my fellow-prisoner towards the citizens of this village, similar to that shown by One of old, in the case of Lot, and the little city of Zoar; and what that is with us, I shall leave it with you and your fellow-citizens to guess at."

"What is your business with us?" turning to Mercer, continued Laurence.

Mercer being in the hearing of the remarks that had just been made by Laurence to the jailor, and knowing that he stood implicated among others in the village, when impertinent curiosity and a love of meddling had rendered them a bore to the imprisoned strangers, exhibiting some confusion, at length replied:

"I have come to see you about a man who stopped at my house last evening. He is, as I believe, crazy, but sometimes speaks sensibly. Your servants," continued Mercer, "that came here with you, and whom you discharged the other day, and told to go home, he calls his sons. He inquired where they were, and when I told him they had gone home, said, 'Where are the gentlemen they came with?'

I replied, 'They are in prison.' At that he sat for some moments silent, with his eyes intently fixed upon the carpet on the floor of his room, then, as it were, recollecting himself, he said: 'Prisons are made for transgressors, but it is not always the case that those who deserve them most get there.' On asking him if he knew you, he replied, 'It is a pleasure to know gentlemen, but often attended with great inconvenience to know those who are not so.' His manners and actions," said the hotel-keeper, "have excited a good deal of curiosity among those who have seen him; and his harmless ways create sport for the people of the village," continued Mercer, as his broad mouth, in a half-sneering grin, exposed a something, more like a poor man's lease, than feelings of sympathy.

"Ah, indeed!" replied Laurence; "then mirth, at the expense of the unfortunate, is among the chief excellencies of your town, I perceive."

Mercer felt the depth of the cut, as intended, and in a few moments, recovering from his embarrassment, added:

"From what I can understand from his disconnected sentences, the Maniac wishes to see you two gentlemen; and I have come to know if his presence would be agreable to you."

"You are kind, Mr. Mercer; it certainly would be; and if the unfortunate desires it, please, by permission of Mr. Jailor, conduct him here," continued Laurence.

Here the Jailor and Mercer withdrew, and the three friends were again alone.

"I wonder what has brought that Maniac here, and

what thought impelled it, in a moment of rationality with him, to inquire for his sons, and then express a wish to see us?"

"Whatever it may be, it is a something more for your fruitful thought and indulgent mode of deciphering, Sam," said Laurence; "for my inclination is still extremely limited, and, indeed, more so now than on a former occasion, to say anything to him."

"But, George," said Hyne, "you forget yourself. Did not everything turn out beyond our most remote thoughts, for our benefit, at the time you allude to? And would it not, on the present occasion, be wise for us to pay strict attention to what he may, in his mixture of delirium and sense, have to say?"

"Perhaps so," replied Laurence.

"Gentlemen, your private matters make me an intruder; and it is my place to leave you, and attend to the delivery of your letter, if you will fold and direct it," said Clairmont, as he rose from his seat, and was advancing to give the door a rap, calling the attention of the jailor.

"Not so quickly," replied Laurence. "Please resume your seat, it is yourself, sir, from whom the smallest share of civility would ever be grateful to our feelings; and the high-toned friendship shown us by, and since our acquaintance with you, renders you not only worthy of, but welcome with us to know, all the past, present and future, of pleasure and difficulties, directly or indirectly, incident to us."

Laurence had scarcely given this earnest of their mutual esteem for the clergyman, 'ere the clatter of the keys within the door locks, announced the approach of the jailor when, in the next moment, him-

self, the landlord, and the Maniac, were in the presence of the prisoners and their reverend friend.

After a few moments of profound silence, Hyne, addressing himself to the jailor, said,

"If, sir, you have satisfied yourself that this man has nothing about his person, serving as aids to our escape from your custody, it is our wish to be alone with him, with the exception of that gentleman, (pointing to Clermont,) when yours and Mr. Mercer's absence, will be another proof of the kindness you have extended to us."

The jailor very kindly, as readily, acceded to the request made; but the landlord, full of that curiosity with which the meddlesome are impregnated, said to Hyne,

"I am curious to know what this man's business is with you and your fellow prisoner, and must insist upon hearing it."

Hyne looked at the animal for a moment, and said, with a collected degree of cool contempt, "Whatever may be your curiosity and your fortified reasons upon it, to hear what this man may say to us, sir, are both at our option to allow or refuse; the latter is most agreeable to us—you will please withdraw."

Little acquainted with politeness, the landlord could understand but one thing, and that was the indignant look of Hyne, when, in the next moment, the jailor and Mercer were locked out, while the three strangers and Clairmont remained within the prison.

To be marred in our affections, consequent upon breaches of faith and confidence reposed, is often productive of irreparable ills; and to be imprisoned because we love, is another strange feature in (using part

of the poet's remark) the "inhumanity of man!" You have seen it even so here recorded, and if, reader, the future events relative to the imprisoned and those who are free, as spoken of in this work, with all of which we have endeavored to amuse, can continue to interest you, for your sake we will say more in the next, while we ask leave, with due deference to your permission, here to close the present chapter.

CHAPTER XLII.

The incidents of life, unknown but as they appear on trial, are the things by which man is proven deservedly great, or meanly low.

DURING the converse between Hyne, the Jailor, and Mercer, the Maniac appeared indifferent to passing events; while, as he sat upon one of the pillars of stone spoken of, he took hold, then letting them go again, of the chains and hand-cuff near him; and occasionally, with a perfect appearance of void in the expression of countenance and perturbed eye, would survey everything in the prison;—he seemed to watch, with an intensity of look, the key-hole of its door.

As Laurence said, the task was Hyne's, to glean by interrogation what might chance to fall, of sense, from the Maniac, and accordingly Hyne ventured the attempt.

"We are glad to see you friend," said Hyne.

"Friend, friend!—ah! yes, that word means a confidential," replied the Maniac.

"Did you wish to see us?" continued Hyne.

"Wish," replied the stranger, "Yes, you may wish and you may be gratified."

Here the Maniac was for some time silent, and taking the chain and handcuff again in his hand seemed absorbed in thought, while, with a wild gaze, his eyes were fixed upon those before him.

"You will be out-generalled now, Sam," said Laurence, "as you seem not to have hit the proper cue, to whatever of sense from this man might chance to be a reply to your questions."

"It is not good to be desponding as long as there is hope. I shall try it again," replied Hyne.

"I am of your opinion, Mr. Laurence," said Clermont, "and have ever thought that of all the conditions, incident to man, that of settled insanity is the most horrid."

"Horrid!" instantly replied the Maniac, as he fixed his eyes intently upon Clermont, and as he let go the articles he had hold of.

For some time the stranger was left in his (if it may be so called in him) reverie, while a brief account was being given by Laurence to their friend of his and Hyne's love affairs—cause of their elopement with the ladies, and of their unfortunate arrest for it.

At the mention of the name of Sligo, as if nature in its towering influence upon parental affection had in the benighted mind of idiotism ordered it, the Maniac seemed immediately sensible of what was being said, and in reply to that part of the remarks of Laurence "those young men are our friends," quickly observed "yes, and what has become of them?"

"Of whom," interrupted Laurence.

"My sons," was the reply.

Here, without waiting for the response of Hyne, the stranger continued: "The ills of life set heavy upon all, and as one of the victims of such, I feel thankful for intermediate moments of rationality, in which to think and speak sense, and to perform the duties entrusted to my care. You say," continued the stranger, "my sons are your friends; so am I, but of me, as yet, you know little, and of that little will presently know more." Then continuing, he said: "Where are my sons now."

On being told that they had left a few days since for their home, he added; "It is well, I know their duties, and where they have gone, events there will prove them still more your friends."

A short interval of silence here ensued, when the stranger again said to Hyne, "Am I in the presence of one whom you and Mr. Laurence know to be your confidant, and who can be intrusted in hearing what I am instructed and wish now to say to you?"

"Do you mean this gentleman?" pointing to Clermont, as he said so, asked Hyne.

"The same," continued the stranger.

"What you may say to Mr. Laurence and myself is equally safe in his keeping, as it will be in ours," continued Hyne.

"Assured of that, I have complied with the first part of my promise to those who are absent, and for whose sake and yours, I am now before you," returned the stranger.

In ecstacies at the success of Hyne, in his several attempts at hitting upon points, from which to derive a sensible series of communications of the stranger, Laurence gave Hyne no time to frame other leading

remarks to further discoveries, and addressing the stranger immediately, said,

"What, sir, is the other part of the promise of which you have just spoken?"

"I need not say more than what I have just said, till that which I have for you, may (if at all) make it necessary to do," replied the stranger.

The cloak spoken of in a former part of this work, was the outer covering of his person at the time of the stranger's interview with Laurence and Hyne in the prison of **********, and there taking it off, a like process was observed with his hunting-shirt—the material of which is also familiar to the mind of my readers. When he had taken the latter from his person, a large knife that occupied a black leather scabbard, attached to the inside of the left breast of his vest, was drawn with it, the stranger commenced cuting some stitches in the lining of his hunting-shirt, immediately in a line with that portion of it covered, when fastened, by the dressed bear-skin belt, that buckled round his bodies.

In a little time was drawn out a sealed package.

"Here," said the stranger, as he presented it to Laurence, "is what has given me much concern for the safe delivery of; and which, with you, may serve as a fulfilment of my second promise, as also satisfaction to the question asked me a few moments since."

Upon breaking the seal, and opening the envelope, it was found to contain two letters—one from the City of New York—the other from Fotheringay.

It is human nature to attend first, amid the affairs of life, to that which most interests you; and in the incidents now being unfolded to my readers, and particu-

larly the fair portion of them, the gentlemen to whom they were addressed, are excusable for reading first the following one:

"*Fotheringay*, 12*th Feb'y*, 1802.

"GENTLEMEN,—Your faithful guides have returned, and just in time, in conjunction with our efforts, to do you another signal favor.

"From the date of this you perceive also that we are at 'the mansion.'

"Our fastidious attendants played the escort, but never can have the credit from us due, gentlemen for bringing us home.

"Everything here since our return seems to wear the appearance of dark design, intrigue and suspicion. But few direct signs, nor even written communications have been given to, or passed with us, yet looks and actions, are, as we suppose, forebodings of approaching ill.

"By a note from a lady friend of ours, and of course of yours, though unknown to you, we learn of the perfidy of Standly. He has boasted of the overthrow by him of your anticipated happiness, and further, that he has, and intends still to do, intercepted all the letters of your fathers to you, so long as you remain in the West.

"Feeling indignant at such treachery as black ungratefulness, we have assumed the province, thinking it in accordance with your approvals to attempt the thwarting, as far as possible, of Standly's designs. Accordingly, we wrote to one of your late guides, the day after the receipt of the note alluded to, and through its author, requesting him, without delay, to

go and get from the post-office (if any) the letters that might be for either one or the other of you. That trust has been faithfully complied with, and the letter herewith inclosed is the result.

"The unfortunate whose first appearance before you was in the library, is he to whom this and that letter are confided for safe keeping, as sure delivery. One of his sons is now waiting for this at a memorable spot with you and us, the "pine thicket," and where he will receive it, at one o'clock to-night, from the hands of faithful Sanco, from ever yours,

"ELLEN,
"SUSAN."

"Messrs Laurence and Hyne, Prison of ——, Va."

After the prisoners had read the letter of the ladies, they handed it open to Clermont, without a single comment, and while he was engaged in the reading of it, they opened and read the other one, containing the following communication to them:—

"*City of New York, January 20th*, 1802.

"DEAR SIR—

"The appearance (we cannot say truth) of neglect in you, upon what ought to be your duty—to write often, is more excusable than in that of Mr. Standly —as from him, business, if not the incidents of your visit to the West, would impel it.

"The last, and the only letter, for aught we know, was dated 3d inst., from a house among the mountains, at which you had arrived a day or two before, and where you spoke of remaining until spring.

"A letter from Mr. Standly, a few days subsequent, confirmed that, and since which we have heard from

neither one or the other of you three, although writing weekly, as we have done, and directing to the post-office of ——, to the care of a Mr. Melvin.

"The present, however, is no time to conclude upon your faults, nor to lecture you (if so) for their commission, but to speak of business, and of the imperative necessity of your immediate attention to it.

"The house of Enslow & Berker here, has overreached itself, and has failed for a very large amount. In their wreck, they have made an assignment, and it has so happened that among others to whom we have been friendly, and for whom 'the milk of human kindness' has run too freely in the assistance of from us, by them we are likely to be sufferers.

"The acceptance of the enclosed drafts, upon notes negotiable and payable in Richmond, Va., by the firm of Long & Buford, due the house of Enslow & Berker, in an amount of twenty thousand dollars, is what we call your direct attention to.

"You are well aware of our kindness and generosity to Messrs. Long & Buford, and will doubtless endorse our opinions of their reciprocity, and prompt as satisfactory arrangement of the affair before you for our benefit. See these gentlemen, and make such arrangements with them as, in your judgments, may be most conducive to securing of the debt, independent of their own account current with us

In haste, your affectionate fathers,

"JAMES LAURENCE,
"SAMUEL HYNE."

"To Messrs G. L. Laurence and Samuel L. Hyne."

"Here," said Laurence, after he and Hyne had

given the letter of their fathers' a second reading, and as he handed it also open to Clermont for perusal, "is another striking instance of the mutability of human life.

"A few days since," he continued, "we were denied by those ingrates the rights of reciprocal friendship. What now, I wonder, will be their plea against the authority in us vested—of measure for measure."

The conversation soon became general between the prisoners and their Rev. friend, relative to the disclosures, with which he had now become familiar, while the stranger occasionally spoken to, made judicious as well adapted remarks upon plans then being devised with intent of purpose. In a little time, the letter to Long & Buford was spoken of, and after reviewing this letter as far as written, a postscript was agreed upon, when the following one was added:—

"P. S.—Since writing the above, we have been honored by the receipt of a letter from the firm of Laurence & Hyne, in the language and over the signatures of our revered parents, which, perhaps, in unison with your wanton as well as unjust and illiberal criticisms upon affairs appertaining to ourselves alone, and with which you have no business further than allowed; you may be inclined to discredit the truth of. It is in relation to a debt due by you to the firm of Enslow & Baker, of New York; the amount of which by assignment is made payable to Laurence & Hyne. The security of its payment by you to them, is made by authority, our business and duty to attend to.

"G. L. L.
"S. L. H."

The letter to Long & Buford had not been sealed

before the signal, as heretofore mentioned at the door of the prison for entry, was heard, when in the next moment the jailor entered, accompanied by one, to him, and to all present, a stranger, except the Maniac.

The keeper of the prison had not forgotten the impressive remarks of Laurence to him on the subject of politeness, and as soon as he had ushered the stranger to the presence of the prisoners, politely bowing, retired, and locking the door, left Laurence and Hyne to an uninterrupted interview with the (as yet to them) unknown.

"For the unceremonious appearance before you of a stranger, as I am, there is no other apology within my reach to offer you, gentlemen, but that arising out of feelings of indignity upon persecution, and the desire entertained of lending my aid to the unfortunate in distress prompts me to. Myself a traveller," continued the gentleman, "yesterday night overtook me at this village, and stopping at the 'Eagle Hotel,' I learned from casual remarks the excitement your arrest and imprisonment have created here. Among other matters gleaned from the talk of those around me, (for amongst them I was a silent listener) was a knowledge of that man's (pointing to the Maniac) living here; and want of discretion and prudence, with which those who were present spoke of his misfortunes, and the representation of the degrees of High Heaven passed upon man! I know this man," continued the gentleman, "and have also a limited, yet so far as it is so, very commendatory knowledge of what and who Messrs. Laurence and Hyne are."

"The practice of the things you speak of, sir," said Clermont, "is proverbial with the weak-minded only,

who by the sensible are more objects of pity than that of scorn."

There is a something in the expression of sincerity, especially when accompanied by an air of benevolence, that begets confidence, and admits to it in others, those who are so. In a little time an exchange of remarks and comment were being passed between the four sane, and the one insane, gentlemen of the prison.

To a question put to him by Laurence, the gentleman replied. "I respectfully claim the right, for reasons which may hereafter be explained, to refuse giving my name; and in doing so, wish not to be understood as being any less ready or willing to perform you a service than I would be were you to know at present who I am and from whence I have come. From what you have spoken since my appearance within these walls, you seem to be in want of counsel, and from the manner in which you have been treated here, would suppose you much at a loss for legal assistance in the prosecution of the claim of your and the father of Mr. Hyne against Long & Buford.

"You are not aware of it, and here let me inform you," continued the gentleman, "that I profess to be an attorney at law, and that any assistance I can give to either or both of you, is at your command."

Thus assured by the gentleman, an immediate declaration of acknowledged favor was tendered him by the prisoners, and in a little time the notes and drafts upon, and letter to, Long & Buford, were being placed in the hands of Clermont, with an understanding on the part of the stranger, to go with and be

present, but not to be introduced to them, at the interview of Clermont with the merchants.

That arrangement had scarcely been entered into before the re-entry of the Jailor accompanied by Mercer and the sheriff. The latter informed the prisoners that he could give them but three more days, from the then present one, to arrange whatever of prospects they might be in possession of relative to their release from prison by bail, otherwise that he should be compelled to take them, as ordered, to the prison of the county in which the offence had been committed.

"We have now no prospect of procuring bail, sir," replied Hyne, "but some other business to arrange which we hope by the time you have just fixed upon, to have had accomplished, when we will be ready to obey you."

When Hyne had answered the sheriff's respectful remark, our landlord of the "Eagle Hotel," said, "It is now my time to speak. I have come to know," said he to Hyne, "how I am to get the amount of my bill? Whether to swear out a writ of attachment against you as criminals, and levy upon your horses and baggage, or if you will give me a proof of your intention to settle my claim without that trouble."

"Why in such an ill humor, Mr. Mercer?" cooly replied Hyne.

"It is enough to put any one in a passion, sir," replied Mercer, "when such men as you are come amongst honest people, such as I am, and everybody else is here; and then for you to put up at the Eagle, and disgrace my house by being taken from it under arrest, for committing of a crime that no honest man would think of, will take me and my family a long

time to outlive the remembrance of in the minds of our neighbors. Besides, sir," continued the would-be-non-such, landlord, "you ordered me out of this room when I came here the other day with, to know what that madman would have to say."

"Ah! well then, it is because we ordered you out, as you say, that makes you fearful of losing your bill against us," said Hyne.

"Why, yes," replied Mercer, "that is one reason, that I do not think such men as you are, ought to be trusted."

"You are quite plain in your reasons," said Hyne, "smiling as he spoke at the ignorant audacity of the man. We may, perhaps, relieve you of one of your troubles, while it would still be, if a like occurrence was now passing, as was the other day, impossible to gratify you in the other. We will see to all this, and for the present," continued Hyne, addressing the Jailor, "you will please show Mr. Mercer his place of exit."

The animal became furious at the gentlemanly, yet piercing close of the remarks of Hyne, and being obliged to walk in quick time, the next moment found the prisoners and their respected guests again alone.

The stranger kindly took it upon himself to see that this Maniac should be protected against insult; that he should not be made a source of amusement and ridicule by others, and that he should be rendered comfortable as well taken care of. After which arrangement, the Jailor was again knocked for, and our prisoners left to themselves.

Aided by one, of whom he knew nothing, save that

requisite to passport, which, above all others, require less surety for—a gentleman, Clermont, in company of the stranger, was at an early hour the next day, at the counting-room of Long & Buford, and knowing no name by which to introduce the stranger, further than that to which he was entitled—gentleman—it was performed by the divine with that etiquette becoming one. In return for which, he was received with but little above the most ordinary of civilities, and if a distinction can be described between the two—the stranger less so.

On presenting the letter to Long, he said to Clermont, "If this document, sir, is from the same source as the one you handed us yesterday was, you have spent your time idly, and your friendship to a bad purpose, while, on our parts, it will be returned to you unopened."

"It is from the source you speak of, and this gentleman having something to do with part of its contents, I would advise you to open and read it," replied Clermont.

With a sort of shallow brained dignity, resembling that of the peacock on raising its tail, "All are not gentlemen who have the appearance of such," said Long.

"True," replied Clermont, "or otherwise we would not be bothered on this occasion with the mere dress of one. But," continued the clergyman, "this is an unnecessary consumption of time, and I must be plain. Will you read this letter?"

"No," replied Long.

"The word '*no*,'" said the stranger with an easy and graceful air, yet determinedly settled counten-

ance, "is often repented the use as well as consequences of, and the negative of the opinion just now expressed by you, that I may not be a gentleman, you may place in the affirmative before that part of the business with which I am connected in that letter is done with between you, Mr. Buford and me."

Here the stranger, taking the letter from the hand of Clermont, said to him: "Come, sir, the present meeting is dissolved, let us return to my room." Then turning to Long, and at the same time laying the letter upon his table, he said: "Read that without delay, and when you will have done so, come to No. 15, at the Eagle Hotel, where I shall be and expect you at eleven o'clock to-day." Thus saying, the stranger and Clermont withdrew, leaving the merchants to reflect and decide upon what course they would take, in an occurrence so unusual, to those who had fancied themselves as giving tone to the more *intelligent*, better *hearts*, yet *lighter purse* of the community of the village and its vicinity.

"That man seems authoritative," said Long, as the stranger and Clermont left the store door.

"It may be better," replied Buford, "for you to change your mind and to read what those imprisoned lovers may have written to us now. And," continued Buford, "with regard to their ministerial upstart, we can notice or not notice him, as we may determine upon what he has said may require."

"It is better to humor than to be played with by fools," returned Long, as he was in the act of breaking the seal of the letter, that in the next moment he was reading aloud to Buford.

After the letter of the "criminals" had passed a

second reading, it was laid open upon the table before them, and each one of the merchants, with the thumb of the right hand pressed against the temple, the first and second finger supporting the forehead, the elbow on the table, and arm erect, remained for some time silent, with their eyes intently fixed upon the harmless paper, but earnest of the sentiments written upon it.

An intervention of profound silence for some minutes ensued, when Long, rising from his chair and traversing the room, said, "We are ruined! Why have we been so presumptive and ungrateful, as to deny the assistance asked for, to the sons of our benefactors? Had we not have done so, it would have operated as a respite against this unforeseen as unexpected blight to future success. We are out of the reach of favor," continued Long, "because that already bestowed upon us, has been basely abused and shamefully remembered."

At the close of the relenting and self-reproof remarks of Long, Mercer entered the counting-room.

With all that action as expression so often seen in those who ape the manners and customs of others, and who, like automatons, move only as they are moved, our host of the Eagle Hotel, said, "I have just heard of it, and like the way you answered and treated our imprisoned lovers, in their application to you to go their security in bail. Now don't you think it would be better for me to attach their horses for the payment of my bill? If I don't," continued the *vapor-souled animal*, "it will never be paid, for they *are poor and can do nothing.*"

"Your troubles concerning the prisoners are small

compared with those of ours, commensurate with their appearance here. Go home," continued Long, "and when you see, treat them, and all about them, with marked politeness and attention. Fail not! as you respect me and what I say; for they," continued he, "have it in their power to make us, and many here, live at the sign of the 'Case is altered.'"

The merchants being changed in their sentiments toward the prisoners, from their fear of approaching events, so was Mercer—"like master, like man"—seen following in their wake. For the former as criterions, the latter was, after the manner of the larger, as male of the duck species, seen nodding approval. But we must on, lest the approaching conclusion of our efforts to interest, may or may not have been gained for us in our allusions to and comments upon humam life, as it was and still is.

The hour had arrived, and punctual to the imperative directions of the stranger, both of our merchants were announced at, and entered his apartment.

The manners and deportment of the stranger wore an easy, graceful and dignified appearance, which, united to a suavity dissipating restraint, rendered all who approached him free and unreserved.

Our merchants, as is very natural to men of business—and especially where that business is of such a nature as involves integrity, honor, profit, or loss, as was then theirs—were not long, in spite of the stranger's general, as interesting, remarks upon the country, its then advantages, facilities, and early incidents with which its history was connected, before they brought to his notice and consideration the matters with which

they were directly connected, and that have already appeared before my readers.

They attempted an apology for, and upon the seven-mile boot stride, with which the merchants, it will be borne in mind, had trodden under foot, as it were, the recollection of favors received, and from it the coolness with which they had received and treated the application for release of the unfortunate sons of the merchants, their friends in New York.

In reply to all that—the stranger said, "Those are matters of entire privity, gentleman, and with which I have nothing directly or indirectly to do; but which ought to be spoken of and said with, and to those to whom they properly belong; for there," continued the stranger, "if your apologies be accepted, you will have gained what I am not empowered to deny nor to accept of. My business with you, is to receive the amount due from you, or to secure its payment to Laurence & Hyne, from an assignment made to them for their benefit, by the house of Enslow & Baker. Are you ready for, and can you now satisfy the demand?" continued the attorney, with that kind of pleasant look, indicating a like share of compassion as consideration.

"We are neither ready for, nor can we now satisfy the demand," replied Long; "and, sir," he continued, "if not allowed time to do so in, we must lose our honorable standing as merchants here, and sacrifice, at great loss, all we have by care and industry acquired."

"What you have told me," returned the stranger, "is bad enough to think of, and far worse to realize. Attorneys-at-law," continued the stranger, "may have

and are justifiable as well as praiseworthy in entertaining, as exhibiting, private feelings of generosity and kindness; but in the exercise of the reposed confidence of their clients, and the duties due them from us, we must attend to instruction, or —— instructions and the profits arising therefrom will leave us. I must, therefore, proceed to the institution of a suit—or, if it be any accommodation to you, take mortgage upon your lands, tenements, goods and chattels, of which, to my personal knowledge, I am well aware you are in possession, and to more," added the attorney, "than the amount of the debt in question."

The facts, with which the attorney was conversant, he being a stranger, and how, as such, they could have become familiar to him, from the countenances of the merchants, were matters involving mystery, as rather astounding and unexpected information of to them. And being still more convinced of the attorney's earnest towards them, was for some moments silent, when Long again addressing the stranger said, "There is, sir, but one alternative in our present condition left us, whereby to save our credit here, as well as that it may be now and for the future, in New York, and that is to be reconciled to and to give your terms, in whatever of our effects we are possessed, in order to procure the payment of the debt you speak, and we acknowledge the justice of. If this declaration on our parts is acceded to, state your terms with regard to the limited time allowed, and we will execute the mortgage," continued Long.

"Your proposition, gentlemen," replied the attorney, "is one I am happy to hear you speak of, and one that with me and others, this affair con-

cerns, is productive of two good consequences redounding to your credit. First, that it affords a striking proof of the *honesty* of your *intentions*, and in the next, that it might have a weight of influence that no other course might produce upon the minds of those having immediate control over the lenity asked for, in point of time allowed for the liquidation of the debt now hanging over you. The time you ask for, and its extent, are matters in my duty to my clients, that the prisoners, Mr. Laurence and Mr. Hyne, have the entire option of. And for that, and the other reasons of which I have just spoken, I would advise your personal interview with them upon," continued the attorney.

At that moment a rap was heard at the door, and at the words "come in," from the stranger, Mercer entered the apartment, and bowing with that sort of complaisance which the force of circumstances are often seen to produce in vulgar minds, created by the hope of favor, or by the lash of conscience, said to the stranger, "I have come, sir, to inform you that dinner is ready, and waiting your convenience; and to ask your opinion whether or no, a nice one that I have prepared for them, would be accepted of, with myself in attendance upon the gentlemen?"

"To whom do you allude?" said the stranger.

"Why, to Mr. Laurence and Mr. Hyne, sir; they are clever men, and I am mighty sorry for the bad treatment they have met with here," continued Mercer.

"You astonish me, Mr. Mercer," replied the stranger. "It is not long since that I heard you pronounce Mr. Laurence and Mr. Hyne to be the meanest of

men; and now you speak of them as being not only gentlemen, but as entertaining sorrow at their misfortunes. Of the opinion you ask," continued the stranger, "the surest way of coming at its correctness from me, is for you to wait upon them with the dinner you spoke of having prepared for them, and then, in person, you will know if it is or is not acceptable, and its preparer agreeable or on the contrary to them."

Here the animal confessed to the stranger that he had been deceived—that he had pinned, as it were, his opinions to the coat sleeves of others; and like a certain reptile of the serpent order, that becomes blind in the month of August, he was too much given to adopting the opinions of others, of whom he was meanly fearful, or with whom he was safe in the lap of their favor to maintain independent ones of his own. Such was Mercer. And as a tenant of Long & Buford, by whom he was raised to what he was, (proprietor of the "Eagle Hotel,") he aped their movements and acted at their nod.

In a few moments the stranger, Clermont, the merchants and the Maniac were seated at the dining-table, where much of a display of neatness, with all the variety the country afforded, was before them to tempt their appetites and to gratify them, aided by spirits and wines of the best order from the cellar apartments of the merchants.

On the occasion Long was master of ceremonies, and in the meanwhile, Mercer, excusing himself, accompanied by a servant bearing the dinner spoken of, was soon seen at double-quick time measuring his steps toward the jail, with some two or three bottles of wine, and as many of brandy and rum.

"What's out now," inquired the Jailor, as Mercer came into the room nearly out of breath, saying, as he entered, "Is your dinner over?"

"No," replied the Jailor, "but I am just about taking the prisoners their's."

"Then I have come in time. Don't take yours, but the dinner I have prepared and brought for them," said Mercer. "Let me tell you" (looking at the Jailor with much earnestness,) "we have all been deceived in our opinions about the prisoners—they are gentlemen, and must be treated very well. Open the door, quick, and let me in!" continued Mercer, as from the beginning to the end of his remarks, he spoke in rapid succession from one thing to another.

"You are much changed in your opinions now, to what you was of them when these men were committed to my keeping," replied the Jailor, as he was in the act of taking his instrument of entry from a large desk that stood in his office.

"It becomes me to be so, and not only me, but those upon whom I am dependent," replied Mercer.

"Ah!" said the Jailor, "then there must be something afloat that disturbs the minds of Long & Buford, for you know," continued he, "that whatever they do, you will run the risk of breaking your neck, rather than not follow their example. Is it not so?"

"Yes," returned Mercer, "and you know another thing, that when men are rising in the world, they almost kiss the feet of those from whom favors are bestowed, and that is all right. The present," continued Mercer, "is a case in which we have made a mistake, and I, with Messrs. Long & Buford, must

take such steps in it, as to enable us, and that quickly too, to get on the right side again."

"What do you mean by the expression, right side again?" inquired the Jailor.

"Why," returned Mercer, "the fathers of these gentlemen are wealthy, and have sent to them, as I understand, notes to a large amount, to be collected of Mr. Long and Mr. Buford, and we must now treat the young gentlemen well, in order to gain their indulgence in the matter."

"Ah, Mercer," replied the Jailor, as he looked him sternly in the face and caught his eye faltering while he spoke, "you are a weather-cock. And there are many like you, too mean to be relied upon. It would be nothing more than a just retribution, of the atrocity now in view, and the insults you have heaped upon them, if these gentlemen were to spurn you and that which you offer, not out of respect, but a policy founded upon base deceit. I will gratify you, if it is one," continued the Jailor, "but from what I have heard from the prisoners, cannot think you will be a welcome visitor under any circumstances, to those you have spoken of and threatened, as have been, those you wish to see. For my own part," continued the Jailor, "I have repented of the folly of forming opinions upon the mere *say so* of others; who blind to anything but envy, think it wise to make, whether right or wrong, others, proselytes to such opinions."

Upon the approach of the Jailor and Mercer to the door of the prison, the latter said, "Is there a table in the room?"

"Yes," replied the Jailor, "for I, convinced of my errors respecting those men, have, at my own expense,

tried to render them more comfortable than when they were put there, so that when the gentlemen go hence, I hope they will be impressed with the belief, that every comfort in reach of my power has been rendered them, and myself in the enjoyment of a peaceful conscience." In the next moment, the door was opened, when the keeper, Mercer and the servant, were in presence of the prisoners.

Not wanting in deception and modest impudence, Mercer spoke of the feelings of respect he entertained for them. And with that sort of deportment ever the attendant of *meanness detected*, begged of the gentlemen to partake of a dinner he had prepared, and had brought to them; adding, "That he hoped a few bottles of spirits and wine would also be acceptable to them."

During the eulogy upon his friendship, praise of his dinner, and remarks upon its accompaniment, the prisoners remained silent, and when he had ceased speaking, Hyne said: "The present, sir, is not a time in which we can take your word as a test of sincerity. Your dinner may be what you say it is, and your spirits and wine of the best quality, yet, before we can partake of either, (should we do so at all,) you must first taste of every article you have brought us."

"You do not mean by that remark, that my object is to poison you?" replied Mercer.

"It matters not what my meaning is, or my intentions are, in saying what I have, and singular as it may appear, we cannot partake of it at all, of your hospitality, before you do as I have asked you," continued Hyne.

Mercer's object was thwarted, and in a few moments

after he was seen, accompanied by his servant, bearing the dinner, spirits and wine, untouched, on his way to the "Eagle Hotel."

The gentlemen of that day at the Eagle Hotel, had just risen from table, at which we had left them, with the intention of visiting the prisoners, when Mercer entered his house; and supposing that his civilities had commenced a favorable impression upon the minds of the prisoners, Long, Buford, the stranger, and the Maniac, were soon announced by the Jailor to Laurence and Hyne.

Upon entering the prison the stranger performed the etiquette of introducing Long and Buford, though known in New York, to the prisoners. Whereupon Long, on the part of the former, said: "At an unexpected moment gentlemen, we have been apprised of an event, equally unthought of, as unlooked for, with all of which you are intimately conversant. The arrangement for payment is already made with your attorney, excepting the time allowed to do so in—to be embraced in the mortgage. And that, as we are informed, being entirely at your option, we have come to ask your indulgence in; at as long a time as may accord with your kindness, and practicable in the affair. Otherwise," continued Long, "our respectability and reputation are ruined—our credit lost—and our wives and children rendered beggars."

A profound silence was observed during Long's eloquent as feeling appeal for indulgence and favor, and for some moments after its conclusion, our prisoners sat, as if they were not animate but sculptured appearances of human form.

"By what right, gentlemen," said Laurence to Long

and Bufort, "do you ask indulgence and favor, in a matter not ours, but in which, by direction of our fathers, we are agents only, and as such feel it an imperative duty to comply with their orders."

"We ask it, sir," replied Long, "upon principles of long standing friendship, and the known integrity of our house to meet the demands against it."

"The last part of your remarks are well enough, and highly honorable; but the first, *friendship* (emphasising the word) is little known, and still less practiced by either one or the other of you. Else, why have we been so long confined within these walls?" returned Laurence.

The direct allusion to their imprisonment, and shameful deportment with which the prisoners had met from them, created in the minds of the merchants, that sort of acknowledged conscience lashed for dictating to others, what they were not in the practice of themselves. And which invariably ensues, when *truth*, like a two-edged sword, developes the "inhumanity of man."

"Were we, Mr Long," continued Laurence, "to lend as deaf an ear to your request, as you and Mr. Buford have done to ours; what, I ask, would you think of such as act?"

The animal was silent, and appearing as a condemned culprit, averted his eye, that those of him who was speaking should not meet it, to see what the talisman of his heart was silently, though impressively, proclaiming.

"You remind me, Mr. Long," continued Laurence, "of the nature of one of the feathered tribe—the Turkey—which, becoming caught, goes step by step

picking the grains of corn strewed in its way, till within the trap, it becomes forgetful of how it got there, is too vain to reflect, and too selfish to look from whence it come. Of such, sir," continued Laurence, "is man! Humble in indigence; but when wealthy, is forgetful of those by whom aided!"

Here Long attempted an apology for his and Buford's course toward the prisoners, when Laurence, with that politeness bespeaking the gentleman, and pleasant smile upon his countenance, stopped him, and then said:

"We ask no apology on this occasion from you, and if," he continued, "the sense of injustice and illiberality you have shown us, is so impressive as to have convinced you of your error, let its conviction prompt you to do so no more. And also to reflect well, and thoroughly understand the conditions of, before you decide against the unfortunate."

Here the merchants rose to take their departure from the prison, when Laurence requested them to remain a moment in their presence, addressing the attorney, said,

"You will please, in the mortgage of those gentlemen given to Laurence & Hyne of New York, allow any time for the payment of the debt, that you, Mr. Long and Mr. Buford may conclude upon."

The day following their interview with the prisoners, our merchants executed the mortgage spoken of. The bill of Mercer, including those of the stranger and the Maniac, was paid by Laurence & Hyne.

A handsome fee to the attorney, and complimentary donation to Clermont was accepted of. A like mark of esteem was handed to the Jailor for his politeness

to and attention upon them, and on the morning following, our prisoners, under charge of the sheriff, assisted by three others as a guard, set out for the jail of the county in which the offence with which they were charged had been committed. The sheriff and one of his men having on their horses the holsters and pistols of Laurence and Hyne.

Things thus arranged, our prisoners at their request attended by their empowered escort, left the village at an early hour for the purpose of escaping that annoyance from idle curiosity, that so much as improperly feeds the mental appetite of many.

The friends of the prisoners, Clermont, the Attorney, and the Maniac, were cordially bidden adieu to, and on arriving at the foot of the mountains, the party commenced a route designated by marks upon trees, as the only one leading to their place of destination.

CHAPTER XLII.

Benevolence is the stepping-stone to the inheritance of Heaven! Faith, Hope and Charity are its means of entrance—and their reverse—Condemnation!

THE route of Mr. Sheriff and his party, necessarily led to a crossing at several places, the placid as beautiful, though when flushed, rapid stream of Roanoke river, which from the melting of the snow in the mountains, had began a dispute with its banks, and threatening with danger the traveller venturing its fords.

The departure of the prisoners from the village, had now put an end to much of that sort of tea-table talk among the ladies as that also of the bar and counting-room, discussion among gentlemen usual on love or any other affairs, that rouse to curiosity, interest or speculation, the otherwise dormant intellect of the people of small towns; and it may not perhaps be improper, here to add, large cities.

Still a smattering of what we have just spoken of was yet lingering in the mind's-eye of that people. For the stay of the stranger and the Maniac, and that too at the "Eagle Hotel," kept curiosity afloat, and gave to the minds of stick-whittlers at every corner of the streets of the village, a sufficiency to go upon, and occupy their minds with.

On the day following the departure of the prisoners and after Clermont, by invitation had dined with the Attorney, and his unfortunate friend the Maniac, the former of the two latter spoke of taking a ride, and requested the Clergyman to attend to him. "I feel grateful, sir," said Clermont, "for your kind invitation, but am under the necessity of declining its acceptance," as with serenity of countenance betokening all right within his eyes rested upon the stranger.

"Why so, sir," quickly replied the latter.

"For the best of reasons, I have no horse, nor means to spare from wants, to hire one;" replied Clermont.

"If they are the only ones, the causes shall be quickly obviated," returned the stranger.

Here the Attorney addressing Mercer, who had profitted by the lectures recently given him, and who was now rather annoying than otherwise in his polite-

ness and attentions, said, "You will please have mine and my room-mates' horses bridled and saddled for me." In a few moments after, the Attorney and Clermont were on horseback and away.

It was that hour, when the sun, in his resplendent orb was bidding an adieu to the calm of the surrounding scenery which proclaims with silent reverence, the Majesty of the Great I Am!—for the purpose of lighting other worlds, that the Attorney and Clermont were returning to the village.

On entering the main road leading to it, one of two gentlemen travellers accosting them, inquiring, "How far it was to the next town?" being answered, the gentleman continued:—"We are strangers, and will feel much obliged, if you direct us to the best public-house."

That was promised, and in the course of their approach to the town, occasional inquiries were made by them, and among others, "if Clermont, or the Attorney knew the mercantile house of, or were acquainted with the firm of Long & Buford."

Being answered in the affirmative, the speaker continued:—

"We have business with that house, and you will confer another favor, gentlemen, if informed of, to whom we can apply as a business attorney?"

"You are speaking to one, who upon trial, I hope, you would find of that class," returned our Attorney.

By that time the party had arrived at the Eagle, and dismounting, Clermont bidding the Attorney and the travellers "adieu," went home; when, in the next moment, the remaining three were in the sitting-parlor of the hotel.

Ere the travellers had time to say, "Landlord, we wish to have a room," the eyes of several were fixed upon them, and even the inquisitive looks of him who, above all others, ought not to have been so, were mingled in that, to many, delicious beverage, too prevalent, of prying into the affairs of others and leaving those of their own go unattended to.

In a short time, the adjoining apartment to that occupied by the attorney and the Maniac, and which opened into it by an interior door-way, was prepared for and walked into by the travellers.

After tea, and on their return to their apartment, the travellers discovered the attorney and his Maniac acquaintance walking in a like direction to that of theirs, and halting and unlocking the next door.

"I perceive we are your neighbors," said one of the travellers to the attorney.

"Yes, sir," replied the latter, "and the interior of the room makes us more so, by a door opening from yours into ours."

"We feel glad of that," replied the traveller, as he continued: "Thinking yourself positively engaged by us in the business that brought us to this country, you will be quite convenient, and to whom we can have access without being subjected to the gaze and comment of the curious."

"You honor me, sir," was the reply, as the four entered their respective rooms.

In a little time, a rap was heard at the inner door of the travellers' room, and the words, "come in," being spoken by the attorney, the door was unlocked, when the travellers entered his apartment.

After they became seated, one of the travellers said:

"Business of some import to us, part of which lies at this place, has brought us to this now 'far West.' And, as business men, having but little time allowed for delay, we wish to perform it, and be off again to other parts of your country."

Here their business was made known to the attorney, and soon sociably spoken of and upon by the party present. Then and there, for the first intimation of it, the recent affairs that had taken place in the village, and which, thus far, is all familiar to the minds of my readers, was made known to the travellers. At its intelligence they sat for some moments absorbed in thought, till, at length, one of them, accompanied by a heavy sigh, as he gave utterance to it, said:

"And has it come to this? We, sir," continued the traveller, "are they from whom the young men you speak of have derived their exisitence. I," continued the traveller, "am the father of Samuel L. Hyne, and that gentleman (pointing to the other) is the father of George L. Laurence, the prisoners, of whose ill fortune you have given us the intelligence."

Surprise, from a two-fold source, was the first ingredient for the action of his mind with the attorney, when the Maniac, whose few and far between remarks in rationality, speaking, said:

"Addition, substraction, multiplication and division, are the rules by which arithmetical problems are solved. And in many of the affairs of life, all are badly as ungenerously used."

"This man has said wisely," continued Hyne; "for in the first two rules mentioned, man in his hours of ease, *adds* self-consequence, and often in such assumption, *subtracts* from others the credit due; while, in doing so, he *multiplies* distrust, and *divides* a shameful as corrupt spoil. Our sons have been the victims of scorn and neglect from others who should have been the first to offer them aid; but we will see to it, and let those upon whom favors have been bestowed, and badly reciprocated, know how they are weighed by us," continued Mr. Hyne.

From the moment the travellers had accosted the attorney and Clermont in their return ride to the village, one of the former was eyed with all that mental scrutiny, upon reminiscences of long-gone-by years, that length of time makes it occasionally difficult in arriving at positive conclusions upon. And not daring to venture an effort to bring himself there to the recollections of the gentleman, the attorney remained in suspense upon it till the travellers entered his room, and the name of Laurence was announced.

"In the revolutions of Time's wheel there are events falling from its receptacles, strange as astonishing, and which stagger credibility. But I cannot now be mistaken," said the attorney, as with a look of pleasant certainty he fixed his eyes upon Laurence. "Do you remember, sir," he continued, "a small detachment of young men stationed near a small village in the South, and at the residence of a wealthy partisan of the Revolution in the struggle of our country for her liberty?"

Here a reaction of long dormant recollections of events alluded to, instantly rushed torrent-like to the mind of Laurence, when, in the next moment, seizing the hand of the attorney, he exclaimed, "Edmund Miller! is this you?"

"Yes," returned Miller; "it is—but only in part of what I was then; for Time having made indelible traces in my person and appearance, you behold me much changed, yet in intellect sufficiently identifying to recognise my Revolutionary companion and old friend."

In the next moment an introduction to Mr. Hyne was being given by Laurence, and then addressing Miller, he said to him, "Who is this stranger you have with you?"

"One," returned Miller, "who is equally your friend, as he is that of your son. And in like manner," continued Miller, "is the undeviating one of Mr. Hyne and his."

Here the merchants were introduced to the Maniac by Miller, saying, "Allow me the pleasure of making you acquainted with Mr. Close, who, for purposes, of which you will hereafter be apprized, has assumed that of the character of a deranged intellect, and as a Maniac has yet much to perform in the affairs with which your sons are still surrounded."

After some time of profound silence in all present, Laurence, raising his head from an inclined position, his hand and elbow resting upon the back of his chair, said, "How strange and unaccounted for, Edmund, are many of the incidents of life. In the day spring of youth, neither of us thought an occurrence like that of the present one would ever take place. Here,

after years of separation, we have again met, and in that meeting, I behold the friend of my youth, watching over and faithfully attending to the defence of my son, in the wrongs and indignities perpetrated against him. I cannot but believe," continued Laurence, "from what you have told me, that that jet-black hearted creature, Standly, is at the touch-spring of all this, since what you say, strongly corroborates with that of his deportment, and of which we have accidentally been apprized at, and from other sources. He has not only said that Mr. Hyne and myself had disowned and discarded our sons, but to effect a more diabolical purpose, has reported us dead, and he in direct possession of everything we own. This," continued Laurence, "he has done for the purpose of effecting a change of sentiment, at that time, (I know not whether now,) in favor of our sons with Miss Antoinette Leftridge and Miss Leontine Withrow. Should he be successful, two nephews of Standly are the designed husbands of those young ladies, and the young men to reap the benefit of their uncle's plot—and that, too, before anything contradictory of his falsehood can be known at Fotheringay, to which place they are on their route by way of Richmond. We," continued Laurence, "left New York, without our object and destiny being known, but to few, and coming direct, are now not, I fear, very far in advance of them. Our object is to get off from here as soon as we shall have seen and made with Long & Buford, a final settlement of all our business matters with them, and then, as we are utter strangers to the routes through those mountains, to procure an efficient guide to con-

duct us through them, with as little delay as possible, to Fotheringay."

"Be not alarmed," replied Miller, "Standly's villanous treachery will not prosper."

"And it shall not, for want of a guide, for I am at your service," said Close.

The merchants requested Miller to go after breakfast the next morning, to Long & Buford, asking a call from them, at the "Eagle Hotel," upon Laurence & Hyne; and, it now being a late hour of the night, our friends went to their beds, where it was at a still later hour, before the imaginations of either became willing to accede to any propositions of Morpheus.

The next morning, just as Miller was leaving his room, on his mission, his two friends entered his apartment, and in a moment after a rap was heard at his door, followed by the presence of Clermont. "Pardon me, sir," said he to the attorney, "for this intrusion, I thought you and your friend were alone."

"Don't mention it," returned the attorney, "for whether so or not, I shall always be glad to see you." Then addressing the merchants, he said, "Gentlemen, the Rev. Mr. Clermont."

Another agreeable surprise was now at hand. "The Chaplain of our regiment, William Clermont?"

"Major James Laurence, 2d Infantry! Sergeant Samuel Hyne, Co. 'C.'", were the instantaneous ejaculations of the three long separated, now met friends; when the hands of each became clinched, accompanied by that peculiar expression of feature, betokening the brilliancy of sincere regard. Here Clermont was introduced, in their proper characters, to the Maniac and the Attorney, when the latter said,

"Well, gentlemen, I will leave you, for the present, in the enjoyment of that pleasure, 'true friendship,' felt only among those whose hearts, like the diamond, reflect one undeviating brilliancy in every position and under all circumstances of life!"

In the absence of Miller, a recurrence of the vicissitudes through which they had passed, was being spoken of, until Clermont, speaking of the sons of Laurence and Hyne, said,

"I was within an ace of performing the ceremony of marriage between your sons and two of the choice work of Almighty God's master-pieces of creation. 'That which is in most apparent danger, is not always followed by loss.'"

"You may do that yet," replied Laurence.

Here, reader, we will leave our army friends, including Close, (for he was commanded by Col. Leftridge, and, of course, in the same regiment with the others,) engaged in the pleasures of review, and ask your permission, as we have done frequently, for a short time to look into Miller's course, and their treatment of it, in the presence of Long & Buford.

The mercantile gentlemen, so often, recently, alluded to, had, as is the false custom of many, conceived and still entertained a coolness toward Miller, for no other reason than that of his having attended to strictly what was his professional duty to perform.

Upon Miller's entry at their counting-room, he found the merchants seated at a comfortable fire, and in rather reflective than talkative moods. At his appearance before them, their countenances became morose, and to Miller's salutation of, "Good morning, gentlemen!" the bare shadow of common civility even

was not returned, nor a chair offered by either of the merchants. Yet, making a virtue of necessity, especially where convenience dictates it, Miller put his hand upon a chair within his reach, and soon locating himself, became a *tenant at will* upon it.

The difference between clowns and the well-bred, was here manifest; and Miller, perceiving a want of politeness predicated upon a want of sense, determined upon having it more strikingly developed in the course of the business with the merchants, for the second time intrusted to him.

"How is business, this morning, gentlemen?" said Miller.

"Don't know that it is any concern of lawyers to inquire," replied Buford, somewhat agitated.

"Excuse me, Mr. Buford; you seem excited, and construe what intends politeness for that of rudeness. What have I done to merit your spleen?" replied Miller.

"Enough, sir; for if it had not have been for you, our property would not have been mortgaged," returned Buford.

"That's your mistake, Mr. Buford; for if I had not have been fortunate in getting the business, and thereby earning a fee by my profession, some one else would," calmly replied Miller.

"We could have managed it more to our interest, had it been done by a man known to us," replied Buford. "Besides, sir," continued he, "it has deprived us, for the present, of entering into partnership with Mr. Standly and his nephews, who, he has informed us the other day when he was here, are to be married to the rich heiresses of Fotheringay, taken

from the hairbrained youths, Laurence and Hyne, a day or two before you came to our town, and where we wish you had never come. There is, however," continued the vindictive animal, "one delicious consolation left us, and that is, that those loving ladies and eloping gentlemen, will, it is hoped, be sent to the State Hotel, at Richmond, which they are in every way qualified boarders for."

"That is a hard sentence, and may prove too harsh an one, under the present state of your affairs," replied Miller.

"If that remark, 'present state of affairs,' is allusive to our embarrassments, we calculate, with no fear of success, to obtain the amount from the marriage resources I speak of, to pay the debt to Laurence & Hyne. And then," continued Buford, "change the mortgage to a more lenient holding, in the hands of those far more liberal and generous than the house you are the lawyer of have ever been to us."

"Your plans are wise ones, but should they fail in maturing, will be a death blow to your air castled and illiberal as unjust aspersions," coolly returned Miller. "But we will change the subject a little. I have come with a message requesting both of you to call upon the gentlemen this morning, with me, at the Eagle Hotel," continued Miller.

"What gentlemen?" said Buford.

"Mr. Lawrence and Mr. Hyne," replied Miller.

"What! are they released?" said Long, who had, during the conversation between Buford and Miller, remained a silent listener.

"Of that you will be informed, when you see them," returned Miller

"Well," continued Long, "I don't know what business they have with us, but we will go and see."

Here, taking their hats, cloaks and gloves, the two merchants, accompanied by Miller, were measuring their steps toward the hotel.

On their way to the "Eagle," the merchants met with a citizen of the town, who had been present at their recent difficulty already known. Seeing the attorney with them, the gentleman, in a kind of smile, said: "Well, Long, to use your own expression, are you going to *live at the sign* of the '*case is altered*,' again."

"No," he replied, "But the prisoners are here again wishing to see us, and, as I suppose, they are ashamed to walk in our streets, we are on our way to gratify them."

A few yards further brought the merchants to the hotel, and seeing no one, not even the occupant landlord, Mercer, they were soon in the presence of—not the prisoners—but the fathers of them.

"Now you may learn what they want with you," as getting two chairs, Miller, with marked politeness, in his own room, requested them to take seats.

The ease with which the well bred of both sexes use one of nature's best auxilliaries, of a well balanced mind and correct heart-*suavity*, was being instantly shown by Mr. Laurence and Mr. Hyne; while on the other hand, consternation was visible in every feature, in every nerve, in all the recesses of an ungrateful heart, punctured by a conscious sense of remorse, then passing in the minds of Long and Buford.

"The appearances of that manly rectitude and serenity of brow, with which, seventeen years since,

you came as strangers before us and obtained from us your start in business, seems now turned into wretched confusion, and which, to Mr. Hyne and myself, is not only surprizing but, I may add, painful. Can we do anything now to release you from such appearances?" said Laurence, as with a dignified composure and benevolent look, his eyes were fixed upon them. Then turning to Clermont, Mr. Laurence continued: "As a shepherd of your flock you seem to have been unfortunate in your ecclesiastical advices, otherwise this confusion would not be the consequence of a meeting with our thoroughly confided-in friends; and we, on this occasion, reminded of the forcible truth of an old maxim, 'that a calm external is the certain talisman of a peaceful bosom.'"

"The maxim is a correct one," returned Clermont, "and I regret much its impressive recall to your memory, in its course upon the past and present time."

Without a solitary remark upon the recent treatment of his own, or that of the son of Mr. Hyne, Laurence, remembering the fact, that "the lash prepared by one's-self for the correction of others, is most severe when applied to the chastisement of those who prepare it, brought in, in his polite and gentlemanly way, the subject of his settlement with them, to the notice of Long and Buford.

"We are desirous, gentlemen," contined Laurence, "of closing up our business and retiring from the care and anxieties of a mercantile life. In which, by permission of the All Wise, we have amassed a competency for ourselves and our families. Our sons, should it suit their inclinations and tastes, may follow our profession; if so, a capital of one million dollars

each, is at their service. And," continued Laurence, "all we have now to do in the far advance of our existence is, to settle up the outstanding debts due our firm, and in the remainder of time to our credit upon earth, perform the duty of Mentors to our beloved children."

"Here," continued Laurence, opening a bundle of papers, "are the different accounts of your purchases from us, endorsed as you perceive, upon the backs of each; as to their correctness, by both, when we last had the pleasure of seeing you in our city. And all now necessary is, to liquidate the gross amount, or secure the payment of it to us."

The chastisement, as intended, was effectual, and under the security of its smart, the merchants acknowledged their inability to meet the demand."

"Then," resumed Laurence, "there is but one alternative left you, and that is the latter of my proposals, *security*."

The merchandise of Long & Buford, the ground on which stood their store, their own residence, the tenement occupied by Clermont, and the premises, buildings and all its appurtenances of the often-mentioned "Eagle hotel," had been kept out of the mortgage heretofore spoken of. And it was only those upon which the payment of the current account for purchases made by Long & Buford, of Laurence and Hyne, of eight thousand dollars, were the indemnities for.

The dates to which the work have reference were not those wherein inducements for speculation on the rise and rapid increase of the demand for, as price of real estate; nor the cool and keen calculating genius

discovered in their operations there, as is elsewhere the case in the present day. Hence it required more squares of ground in the country town here alluded to, and acres by the hundred of the country surrounding it, to secure the payment of Long & Buford's debt to Laurence & Hyne, than is the case in places where improvement and commerce furnishes the impulse to speculation.

Thus situated, the real estate of the firm of Long & Buford, uncovered by the former mortgage, fell far short, after the most liberal valuation allowed upon it, of the debt due. And the next consideration on the part of the creditors was how to arrive at proper, as honorable conclusions relative to the count, and disposal of the goods and merchandise of the firm.

Here Miller, the equally gentlemanly friend of both parties, ventured a remark as follows: "I have no right, Mr. Laurence and Mr. Hyne, to say any thing contrary to your interests as your attorney; nor do I intend it. And with regard to Messrs. Long & Buford, I wish them to understand me, as intending nothing dishonorable, or in the least disreputable toward them."

Here Miller suggested, that as the court in which it could be done was then in session, that Messrs. Long & Buford should confess and suffer judgment to be rendered for the portion of the debt against them remaining unsecured. Then by virtue of replevin, and their acknowledged right to effects, their merchandise being surrendered, an account of stock could be taken—that invoice placed in the amount to their credit, and the goods disposed of.

The proposition being agreed to, the next day the

store of Long & Buford was closed, and an account of stock being taken, assisted by their old yet illiberally treated friends, Laurence & Hyne, and their attorney Miller.

As is too lamentably the truth, many men falsely think it infringing on their dignity, and too condescending in the rank and title of "*lords of creation*," to let those whom they have solemnly constituted their *bosom friends* for *life*, know any thing more of their *business affairs* than they do a *horse* they would bridle and saddle to carry them a *mile guided* by the *rein* and *propelled* by the *spur*. "Vanity of vanities!" Had nine-tenths of the men but one-half of solid reason in the seat of *sense*, as there is a profusion of *hair* upon the *head* and *face*, such shameful neglect of one of Almighty God's best gifts to man — *Woman* — would never be thought of; for the counsels of an affectionate *wife* are cased in the most precious of all gems, *purity;* having its origin in the *fount of love*, ending *only* with *life itself*.

Such was the case with Long and Buford, for they belonged to that class men who think a *wife* ought not to know any thing of a *husband's affairs*—not *entitled* to the honors of *counsel*, and like the *automaton*, are only fit to *move* as they are *moved*.

Madam Long and Madam Buford were not aware of the conduct of their husbands towards young Laurence and young Hyne. Nor were they informed of the wreck immediately following, or of the complete ruin then being accomplished in the business of their hus-husbands.

The ladies of whom we are now speaking, were of that order of superior intellect to which all of their sex

are arrivable—discountenancing the passion for news-carrying and gossiping. *Home* was their *empire;* and the natural diadem, studded by love and duty, were the ornaments of distinction by which they were known and appreciated for, among the circles in which they moved.

The morning of the third day after the close of their store, the inventories of the merchandise on hand of the firm of Long & Buford were completed. In their counting-room, the several amounts of them were placed to the credit of the debtors Laurence & Hyne—in possession of the mortgage proposed, with their goods and merchandise. Long & Buford were then truly living at the sign of "the case is altered."

Like an avalanche, though if possible more terrible in its fall upon the minds of thousands of the virtuous fair than the idea of living among the bergs of the Arctic, the news of their ruin was made known by Long & Buford to their ladies, with the first intimation of the prime cause of it—their illiberal deportment towards young Laurence and young Hyne—and of the fact of their fathers being then in town and at the "Eagle Hotel."

A true lady is like (though known only to Him) God's elect; ever correct in manners, deportment and heart. And Madames Long and Buford being of that class of their sex of which we have just spoken, determined upon casting themselves and one lovely daughter each, on the compassion, regard, and sympathy of our northern merchants.

The next morning after the disasters that had overtaken Long & Buford, and after their ladies had requested their appearance in company with them,

before the New York gentlemen; but refusal, consequent upon disturbed minds and deep sense of their late ingratitude, Laurence and Hyne were preparing their arrangements previous to departure.

They had sent for—and Clermont being in their presence, was in social glee with Miller, Close, Hyne and Laurence upon the past and present events of life, with the expressed views and plans of each upon the checkered remainder falling in with and upon them.

In descanting upon the different conditions incident to man, Laurence said—"The industrious and honest poor are ornaments of the sublime structure of the creation, from the hands of Almighty God, while the rich are fearfully accountable for the use they make of their wealth. For my own part, gentlemen, I have ever tried," continued Laurence, "to be humble in the sight of *Him* who bestows and who takes away at will; and now to dispute his right to his mode of doing so, blessed, not from my own merits, but by the mercies of the Most High, I am in possession of much of the goods, and more than a sufficiency to answer mine, and purposes of mine of this world—and as such, think myself the humble agent only of my Creator, in good works." Just as the speaker had given utterance to the words, "in good works," a servant entered the room and said, "Four ladies ask permission to see the gentlemen from New York."

"It is granted; conduct them to this room," replied Laurence. In a few moments the ladies made their appearance, and possessing that which distinguished them from those who are not so, a gracefulness, not forced nor awkward, but with an ease striking the beholder at once with respect and esteem, bowed to

Clermont, and asked an introduction to the gentlemen they wished to see. That etiquette performed, and the ladies being seated, Mrs. Long, addressing Laurence and Hyne, said, "Gentlemen, we are strangers, though our husbands are not, neither to you, nor to your generosity. The time has come when they have dishonored the former, and forfeited the latter, and in doing so, have more than probably brought upon them an act from you, though just, which renders them penniless, and their wives, and those (looking at the young ladies as she spoke,) pledges of their love, dependents upon your clemency, your generosity, and your indulgence. All this could have been averted; was not the belief a general one, that the women, being the weaker of the two sexes, are thereby not worthy of being consulted with on matters of business in which their husbands are engaged. And now, sirs," continued Madame Long, "in the extreme alternative between abject poverty, and fondly cherished faith, hope and charity, in behalf of our husbands, ourselves and our children, we ask your forgiveness of the wrongs done you, and trial of confidence reposed once more."

Here that auxilliary to the effective force of virtuous woman's appeal, instantly gushed from the just before brilliantly expressive, but now bathed eyes of Madame Long—added to from those of Mrs. Buford,—joined in with by hers and the daughter of the speaker.

The appeal of the ladies was unexpected, as it was a new crisis in the business transaction with Long & Buford. And for some time after its penetrating delivery, the ladies and gentlemen were mute, as if

the power of articulated reply had become paralysed. At length recovering from the reflective mood into which he and the gentlemen present had been thrown, and its result to be shown in one way or another, by him and Hyne, Laurence replied to Mrs. Long, as follows: "Madam, I, and I believe Mr. Hyne, are ever open to the appeals of suffering humanity, and if I may not be thought vain in the expression—incalculably so, when those appeals proceed from the virtuous of your sex. Though a matter of great astonishment, as well as sorrow, the intelligence of the late treatment of our sons from Messrs. Long & Buford, was to us, Mr. Hyne and me, determined not even to advert to it in any way at the time of our settlement with them, nor ever after; consequently, had hoped to leave without anything transpiring to break that intention and emanating from any here. But your appearance, and the appeal made to our generosity has altered my own, and I expect, purpose of Mr. Hyne. Yet, madam," continued Laurence, "whatever purpose that may be, we will, for the present, with great deference to you both, decline taking any course in, until Mr. Long and Mr. Buford with you, and your children are with us, and in presence of those now here."

In a few moments after the reply of Mr. Laurence, and at their own proposal to do so, the ladies left the apartment, with a view of bringing Mr. Long and Mr. Buford into the presence of our New York merchants.

"Well, gentlemen," said Hyne, as the elder and junior ladies left the door, "we know not what a day may bring forth, in however calculating we may be, amid the affairs of life. Yesterday, in the settlement

of the house of Laurence & Hyne with that of Long & Buford, no other thought upon the further intercourse of the two houses occupied my mind, but that of a fixed resolution to have done with all future business, or even social matters, with those who, in the hour of distress, and want of a friend in it, could so coolly as deliberately become treacherous to kindness bestowed, and ingrates to those by whom conferred. I repeat it," continued Hyne, "that those were my thoughts; but after hearing the appeal to Mr. Laurence and me, of those ladies—who are more so as such, than their husbands are meritorious as men—my mind is changed. Not, however, to befriend Long & Buford again, but to benefit their ladies and their children."

"I had thought as much while occasionally looking at you, during the remarks made by Madam Long," replied Clermont.

"And so did I, for it reminded me of many similar expressions of countenance in acts of benevolence done by Colonel Leftridge and Major Laurence to the officers and private soldiers of the old 2nd Regiment infantry, Virginia line, of the army of the Revolution," said Close.

"We feel indebted to you, Mr. Close, for the compliment, in speaking of things long passed, the recall of which produces no *remorse* while living, nor wreck of *faith* when the events of this cease, and another world opens upon the *immortal man*."

"What," said Laurence to Hyne, as he finished his remarks, "is the course you would recommend in the affair now before us?"

"That, sir, which you may conclude upon, will be acceded to by me," replied Hyne.

Just at that moment the room door was re-opened, and the four ladies, accompanied by the late merchants of the town of ********** were again in the presence of those whose names are now familiar to our readers, when another example of marked politeness was being shown, and so much so as to have effected, to a considerable extent, their object, in dissipating confusion in the minds of their late respected friends, and preparing their minds for what they had come there to hear and know performed.

"Gentlemen," said Laurence to Long & Buford, "in the settlement lately had with you, and even before it took place, Mr. Hyne and myself were in possession of the treatment with which our sons had met from you, in the time of their distress and need of aid. We had determined no advert to it whatever to you, but to let its recollection remain with us, as a lasting and striking example of that want of gratitude so often met with in the intercourse of man with man. Your ladies, however, have altered somewhat in us that intention towards you; and it is to them, not us, that your gratitude, if you possess any, is due, for what we now—in imitation of that august Power, and Author of all greatness—intend returning, a good for an evil performed by you. In furtherance of our intention, sirs, it is proper here to state, that we cannot execute it severally without your permission, as sanction. And here suffer me to add," continued Laurence, "that, if agreeable, we will cancel the debt you have recently settled by mortgage of eight thousand dollars, and restore to you the goods and merchandise in our possession, provided you give to us deeds to the property now occupied by Mr. Clermont, and the ground

and tenements of the 'Eagle Hotel,' occupied now by Mr. Mercer, with two other conditions to those I have named: First, that you will allow us to settle upon your ladies, by deeds or gifts, all the real and personal estate covered in the mortgage, with the exception of the properties just spoken of; and lastly, that you will allow us to present to Madam Long and Madam Buford, letters of credit to an amount of two thousand five hundred dollars each, made payable by them to us, or our order, at some future time specified."

Here thankfulness in its purity of gratitude was being instantly shown by the ladies, and that inward conviction which is at last the only salutary corrective of vice. The condescension of the great I Am in righting that which he had made pure, but which from forgetfulness of duty becomes corrupt, was also shown in the deportment of our late merchants, who acknowledging their ungratefulness became forgiven but never forgotten by their wronged friends.

The cancel, transfer, and deeds spoken of, having all been done, the next morning was fixed upon by Laurence and Hyne for their departure. The day of that business, and after they had dined, our four friends, with Clermont added, being in Miller's room, the remarks became general upon the events that had taken place, when Laurence said, "I have one more object in view to perform before we leave this village which may one day or another be a town of some commercial advantages, and of course of more notoriety than it now is."

"What is that?" was the almost simultaneous interrogatory of all present.

"I am not," replied Laurence, "one of that class

of men who wish to wait until they are dead in order to see (as an Irishman would express it) how those whom they think well enough of to leave anything to would use the gift and think of the giver. When I am no more, I will be insensible to the affairs of this life, and consequently cannot know how those who may be my favorites here use what they get, at my generosity, and how they speak of me. So far as I can," continued Laurence, "without detriment to my own and that of the comforts of my family, I want to see and know all that while in existence; and here, permit me to add, that I wish to make a trial of my opinions in two now, and the third, by-and-by, present."

At that moment the eyes of Close, Clermont and Miller were alternately fixed upon one and the other of themselves, and then upon Laurence, which Hyne perceiving, said to the latter:

"In that way peculiar to yourself, sir, you have excited mine as well as the attention of others, as you have just said—present. Excuse me for saying that whatever you do, I claim a participation in. And for putting the question direct, To what now, have you reference?"

"To that of conferring as a gift upon him, the property now occupied by Mr. Clermont; and upon Mr. Close this tenement, or in other words the Eagle Hotel, and appurtenances thereunto belonging, to them and their heirs for ever, of (looking directly at Close and Clermont) those deserving, though poor gentlemen."

"I cheerfully concur with you in sentiment and feeling," said Hyne, in reply to Laurence. While

the announcement of it, and sudden surprise of Clermont and Close refused utterance for a time to their attempts at speech. In their confusion Laurence said, "Nothing gentlemen, is necessary for you to say, but that you accept of our marks of esteem thus manifested towards you." Then turning to Miller, Laurence directed him to write the deeds.

The gifts were accepted; the cordial thanks of the parties were tendered. The following morning Mercer became the tenant of the Maniac, through a temporary guardianship of the stranger. The Rev. Mr. Clermont found himself owner of his neat cottage, and its grounds. Madame Long and Madam Buford were in the mercantile business, (Long and Buford, Agents); the citizens of the village somewhat astonished, but for want of knowing the true cause of appearances were at a loss, to know what to begin at first, in the plentiful supply of food for meddling with the business of others unasked.

After they had dined, Laurence, the Attorney, Hyne and the Maniac, in his sphere in other scenes of dissembling, disappeared from the town and its inhabitants, among whom so much had been said of matters that they knew nothing of, the causes for, nor business to make unjust as illiberal remarks upon.
day.

CHAPTER XLIII.

Merit is its own reward! and in the distribution of its gifts, forgets not those to whom credit, love, constancy and obedience are due.

WHAT next, is now to follow, you may be thinking of reader. Indulge us a while longer, and we shall have told you the entire of what is intended to be written in this work, aimed at thus far, as in the future of it, to merit your approval.

Pregnant, as was natural to them, with their now main desire to get to where their sons had conceived and laid the foundation of earthly bliss, where, too, base fraud had been resorted to, and practised to demolish it, our gentlemen from New York bent their onward way through the intricate defiles of the mountains, piloted by those well conversant with them. And at the commencement of the second day's journey, after leaving the village, Laurence and Hyne, were but with one of their friends (Miller,) conducted in the route, superseding the necessity of crossing the river often mentioned, and which yet flush, disputed any attempt to pass it.

The morning just spoken of, the Maniac bid an adieu to his three friends, and with an intent of watching the movements of the Mr. Sheriff and his water-bound party, was soon lost sight of among the different turns of the mountains, and in an opposite direction to that pursued by Miller.

At about sunset of the second day, after he had left his friends, and when on the top of one of the spurs

of that range of mountains leading to the cabin at the first crossing of the Roanoke river, and where, too, the Mr. Sheriff and his party were detained, the sound of a bugle attracted the attention of Sligo. Halting for the purpose of catching a renewal (if any) of another well-known blast, and thereby ascertaining the probable distance its blower might be from him, the fine animal he was upon put forward his small and well-shaped ears, as if to say to his rider, "That sound is familiar to me, for it is like that of the bugle notes of Captain Nevelle."

Sligo was still, and yet intent upon his object; at length heard the third blast of the bugle as its sound reverberated amid the chasms of the lofty mountains by which he was then surrounded. Here his gallant steed began champing the bit and pawing the earth upon which he stood with a restlessness preparatory to a start, and as if to say, "Master, let me carry you quick to camp."

It was indeed the signal for retreat that Sligo had heard, and in the next moment, yielding to the instinctive mettle of his horse, and slackening the reins of his bridle, the noble animal in an adverse direction to that first thought of by Sligo, (the cabin at the crossing) was with his rider swiftly approaching an encampment well-known to both, at the foot of another spur of the mountains, and at a narrow pass leading to the bluffs commanding a view of the river and cabin already mentioned. Arriving at the camp, his horse extended his hitherto bowed neck, then bending it again, drew down his head, as if to say, "We are in the presence of Captain Nevelle and his command."

In advance of the execution of his premeditated plans, dictated to him in his last interview with the ladies at Fotheringay, this spot had been selected as "head quarters" and rendezvous of his men till further orders from Captain Nevelle, and, among other purposes, for the express one of watching the movements of Standly, whose treachery, too flagrant to contain itself, had begun a development not discovered, till by the ladies on their return home, under escort of Standly, from the town of **********.

Part of Standly's plans are already known to our readers, and a part of the remaining balance, still more dark than that already spoken of, must here be recited.

From the moment young Laurence and young Hyne had refused any longer making a confident of him, Standly formed his plan of treachery in that which had been confided to his special keeping, by not only the young gentlemen but those of their fathers, Mr. Laurence and Mr. Hyne.

Thus, flushed with new designs, aided by a demon-like spirit, involving gain at the idea of self promotion in ill-gotten wealth, he had, as is already known, written to his nephews. Nor did his villanous purposes stop there, for when being commissioned, by the gentlemen at Fotheringay, to go in pursuit of the fugitives, he resolved to make their detection an effectual auxillary to the perfecting of his plans. To that purpose he pronounced falsehoods on their arrest, an account of which is some time since before our readers. Subsequently to that, Standly tampered with Mercer—incensed the minds of Long and Buford,—made a similar attempt upon the mind of young

Miller, in the pursuit of, and after the arrest of the fugitives.

And thence, on their return home, made known his suit in behalf of his nephews to Ellen and Susan. The two latter spurned the indignity offered to their fixed affections, and the former treated with high-toned contempt the assassin-like impudence of the black hearted ingrate.

Led on by a delusive hope, even among the frowns of those whose brilliancy of soul ought to have lighted another passion within him, Standly resorted to one more effort in the attempt of his object; and that was, like the chameleon, to change his color—appear as the friend of the prisoners, on their way to the jail of ———; pretend a full confidence in him, by the gentlemen at Fotheringay, and on meeting with the Mr. Sheriff and his party, to produce a letter, proposing a quash of further proceedings against the criminals—paying fees and charges thus far incurred, thereby inducing release. And, on their pretended peaceful route with him to the home of those they loved, to administer, in prepared brandy, doses of slow poison, in order to bring about the appearance, at least, of the natural deaths of the sons of his patrons.

At Fotheringay, Standly, deep in his designs, still maintained the appearance of, and moved the gentleman; though, from the day on which he returned with the ladies, the latter never admitted him to their presence. Not so, however, with young Miller, for him and his brother possessed souls the lustre of which displayed a nobleness of mind too elevated to

be reached by atrocity, and too independent to be approached by a self-ingrate.

For several days after his return, and at the "Mountain Inn," Standly was more in his room than previous to his mission, it had been his custom to be: and, indeed, his deportment had become so materially changed from that formerly noticed in him, that suspicions of something wrong had daily increased. About the time he supposed the Sheriff would be on the move with the prisoners, Standly formed an excuse for a temporary absence, and soon was away, no one knew where, nor upon what business. That absence, as it subsequently turned out, was with the hope and purpose of meeting with the Mr. Sheriff, his men, and the prisoners.

Nevelle was at his post, and upon the alert, aided by the intrepid Lieutenant Everett, whom our readers may not have forgotten in the affair at the "Take-in House."

Standly and his movements were more intently noticed than he had any idea of. That—the cabin at the first crossing of the river, Mr. Sheriff and his party being there—the reasons for it—and the location at an early period after the arrest, of the encampment of Captain Nevelle, will account to my readers for the cause of the appearance of Sligo among his known friends and fellow-gentlemen confederates.

Intent upon the success of his villanous plans, Standly had managed to avoid all crossings of the river, save the one at which stood the cabin, and on the side that Nevelle and his party had encamped.

In that dilemma, having stopped at the hut of a squatter, in view of the cabin on the opposite shore

from him, Standly watched the gradual as daily decline of the then less enraged stream, noticing as particularly as he could the egress and ingress, out and in, of others and the proprietors of the cabin.

Sligo had given to the Captain, and the persons of his command, a minute account of all the incidents having transpired at the town of ——, and dwelt, with no ordinary degree of eulogy, upon the generosity of Messrs. Laurence and Hyne to him and Clermont, and alluded to intended liberality of the gentlemen to Miller. But in Sligo's remarks upon that occasion, upon Long & Buford, he was satirical, as the former named gentlemen had been generous and kind to the wives and daughters of the latter.

One evening, just before sunset, while the officers and their command of bandits, were seated at a good fire, in front of the tent-doorway of Nevelle, reviewing, in social converse, the scenes and acts of their past lives, and commenting upon those of a like nature passed by others, there was seen at some distance a lady on horseback, and approaching their encampment. Upon her nearer approach, she was discovered to be the younger of the daughters of Sligo, or, in other words, Miss Close.

From the respect and esteem in which his family was ever held, the moment of her arrival was instantly hailed by all with courtesy in rivalship, welcoming her to their tented quarters.

"Some unusual event, my dear Laertes, has brought you here. What is it?" eagerly inquired Sligo.

Imprinting a kiss upon the old veteran's lips, his lovely daughter, with an emblematic smile of innocence and virtue, replied, "Wait, dear father, till your

hungry daughter gets something to eat, (looking around her and at each gentleman as she spoke,) if I have even to cook it myself, and then you shall hear."

Instantly Armsdale, who was that day caterer, as cook to the mess, went to their temporary though plentifully supplied larder, and commenced getting supper, and in doing so to prepare something extra for for the comfort of their fair guest. Miss Close perceiving it, said, "Mr. Armsdale, ladies are better cooks than gentlemen are supposed to be; on this occasion I claim the pleasure of serving Capt. Nevelle and his party in that capacity, with the additional one of presiding mistress of ceremonies, while I remain at your camp."

Thus saying, Miss Close politely requested Armsdale to resume the seat he had vacated, and soon she was employed at what ought to be one of the first requisites of those who calculate upon being (and we suppose there are few at least who do not) wives as well as mothers. Not only to know how it ought to be done, but if necessity may ever require it, to prepare with their own hands a good breakfast, dinner, or supper, for those they have pledged *to love*, *to honor*, and *to obey;* for *Old Time*, in his *record* upon the *events of life*, may blast the fairest, and *shatter* to *atoms*, smaller comparatively than grains of mustard seed, the most brilliant safety-valve belonging to man's precaution. Then

> What a woman! An heavenly mate
> To counsel man in his reckless career;
> Resigned to every incident of fate,
> Proving him to her more dear.

Captain Nevelle relinquished the occupancy of his

tent to the use of Laertes, while he and her father took quarters in the tent of Lieutenant Everett.

The chivalric souls that were encased in the fine figures of those then and there encamped, were additionally aided by an anxious desire of knowing the mission to them of their honored fair guest. And while the brilliancy as sublime display of the starry canopy of high heaven at dawn of day was yet visible, Armsdale had risen from his bunk and was busily employed for the double purpose of thwarting Miss Close in her intentions of acting "cook at camp," and to enable her to receive that repose to which the fatigues of the preceding day rendered necessary for her. Successful in his design, Armsdale had everything arranged, when Sligo awoke and announced to his daughter that breakfast was ready, and the Captain and his men were then waiting for her appearance.

"It is a happy circumstance with you," said Nevelle, smiling, after the salutations of the morning had been given, and all at table, "that you have one so devotedly your friend, Miss Close, as to do duty for you in the neglect of it on your part, for," continued Nevelle, "under martial discipline an arrest might have been the result."

"True, Captain," replied Laertes, as a blush grew visible upon her cheek, "and for his gallantry on the present occasion, Mr. Armsdale will doubtless not refuse the reward for, at some future and more happy day, for all present."

"You are kind in your *double entendre* of 'for all present,' then I may be one of the number?" said Yancy.

"That, I grant you," replied Laertes, "but for further certainties," (looking at Yancy) "I shall refer you to my sister, Dorinda."

In that zest to pleasantry, having ever a pure origin in the society of ladies, passed their breakfast hour, when soon after the gentlemen of the camp were seated, with their fair guest in their midst, and Laertes disclosed to Nevelle that with which she had been entrusted.

After an advert to appearances of affairs at Fotheringay,—her having left her brothers, Washington and Green Close, with Mr. Hardy, on the morning of the preceding day, at a house some twenty miles from the camp of Nevelle, and at another ford of the river, opening to a pass in the mountains, that the Mr. Sheriff would be compelled to enter, Laertes holding a letter in her hand, said to Nevelle, "This will give you a better idea of how things are, of which we have been speaking, than I am presumed to know."

Upon opening the letter, Nevelle found it to be from Ellen, and its contents as follows:

"*The Mansion*, 31*st March*, 1802.

"DEAR SIR:

"We have no parallel more appalling in the future of our love affair attainments in effecting a concentration of love with honor! these two with duty, and the three with happiness than the present represents.

"Susan and myself are in the midst of alarm, for the safety of those whom you know are our intended liege lords. And it is upon the tried gallantry of him to whom I am now speaking, aided by his no less high-toned adherents, to the completion of our anticipated happiness that we depend (the very idea of which

affords consolation in our troubles) for the subversion of the deep-laid as dark plans of a villain.

"Be patient and hear me out, that you may be the better able to devise your operations. We know not what may be his object, but we have fearful forebodings of what it may result in. It is an incalculable pleasure as benefit, to have servants whose fidelity to their owners is unshaken, and any infringement upon it is diametrically in opposition to honor, good faith, and principles of gentlemen.

"Three nights ago, and in his own room at the Mountain Inn, Standly tampered with the integrity and faithfulness of the (true it is,) black in color, but white souled Sanco. The latter, like the Athenian, understanding his duty he practised it. As on the next day he came to the mansion and informed Susan and me, that Mr. Standly had asked him to procure two black quart bottles for him, saying that if he (Sanco) would be silent upon what he wished to tell him, and engage his assistance in, that it would terminate in his liberty, and place him in a better condition than that he was then in. 'But get me,' continued Standly, 'the two bottles, and fill them out of Mr. Melvin's best brandy, and then I will tell you more.'

"The taciturn of Sanco, and his immediate move to get the articles asked for, impressed Standly with the belief that all was as he wished it.

"Soon Sanco returned with the bottles containing what had been desired of him. But thinking there was something not right in the strange deportment of Standly, had taken the precaution to mark on the inner edge of the bottom of each bottle, and with *one* and the other with two marks imposed by means of a file.

"In the presence of Sanco, Standly put into one of the bottles an ingredient, not known what to Sanco, and said to him: 'This is to affect my purposes, and in them to make you happier than you now are.'

"'I can't be much more so in this world, for I have a master who is kind, and whom I serve cheerfully, sir,' as in taking hold indifferently of each bottle in his hands, and during his reply to Standly, Sanco caught sight of the mark of the bottle in which the fatal dose was placed.

"True to them he respected, Sanco purloined the bottle and brought it to us, with the information herein given you, and then returned it unperceived by Standly.

"With the hope through your agency of defeating the fiend-like designs of Standly, we have filled and sent by Mr. Hardy to you a bottle of brandy, marked with a fac-simile of the fatal insignia of death, in Standly's design, 'No. 2,' upon the cork, that you may if possible, be fortunate in placing our bottle and that by a disguised interview with Standly immediately after he shall have joined the Mr. Sheriff and his party—as to have revenge intended, fall upon him who merits it, thereby saving the innocent.

"Standly left the 'Mountain Inn' this morning, and Mr. Hardy accompanied by George Washington and Green Close, with their esteemed sister the good Laertes, follow with the intention of watching his movements and of going to your camp.

"Believe me, as I have ever been very sincerely,

"Your friend,

"ELLEN."

"Captain Henry Nevelle,

"Camp, near Broadford, Roanoke River."

"Gentlemen," said Nevelle, folding the letter, which he had read in the presence of his company, "this is a striking instance of the atrocity but too often found in the hearts of the first order of the works of Divine Providence, the creature man! Standly is but a creature without a soul, or if he has one, it must be of that order that its Maker refuses to own, and that his Satanic Majesty of the regions of despair is proud of, as an auxiliary to his plans upon earth. We must," continued Nevelle, "defeat Standly in his purposes, and with this view all must be on the alert from the present hour, how best, and how most effectually to do so."

Nevelle lost no time after reading and making his remarks, upon the subject of Ellen's letter, and immediately went about forming and arranging his plans and issuing his orders upon them.

It may be remembered by my readers, that no intimacy whatever, nor even an acquaintance with, had existed between Standly and they of Nevelle and his party. They had been seen by him twice only, and that for a short time, the morning of the deer hunt, and at night of the same day at the "Mountain Inn." And so particularly obnoxious had some of the remarks and actions of Standly become to Nevelle, that in one of the subsequent interviews had with the ladies, he was heard to say:—

"There is more danger to be apprehended from the treble face of Standly than is now supposed, and so far as mine and the acts of the gentlemen concerned with me for the accomplishment in your own way of your love affairs, are with us, ladies, Mr. Standly to

me and my command, must remain as he is—a stranger."

The recollection of the position occupied toward him, and the additional contempt with which the intelligence received of Standly's villany had inspired Nevelle, acted like electricity in the minds of him and his party; and ordering Clermont and Irwin to attend him, Nevelle set out that morning for the station occupied by Hardy and the two young Closes.

Just after leaving camp, Nevelle said to Everett: —"Lieutenant much remains for us yet to perform, and to effect our purpose of safety to Mr. Laurence and Mr. Hyne, requires an energy of mind and body in all I leave under your command. In that particular, each one will doubtless contribute his aid. Let the bluffs overlooking the first crossing of the river—the cabin there and its inmates be strictly taken notice of, and above all effect a disguised interview with the prisoners—place them on their guard relative to the *fatal bottle*, while I go to seek and obtain a stranger's interview with Standly, and an exchange of his weapon of death from its intended use upon the innocent, to a desired effect, and with it upon him who merits it. If it should be possibly practicable, order some one of your command to an attempted secret interview with the prisoners at the cabin, informing them not of me as a leader of bandits, but to them an unknown friend, being engaged for their rescue and safety—and what I have gone to do. Look for me when you see me; I can give you no better calculation at present of my return." Thus saying, Nevelle and his two attendants mounted their horses and were soon lost to the view of Everett and the remaining party.

In the absence of his commander, Everett was intent upon the duties assigned him, and during that day had so divided his detachment as to have the heights properly sentinelled, and the movements at the cabin so watched, as to see plainly every movement of those who were there, and those about it.

The Mr. Sheriff was not of that calibre of brain who thought like many do in the office he held, and others in public trust, that the responsible dignity attached thereto forbids the extension of kindness to those whom misfortune, not base crime and blackened villany, have placed in their power. Hence their word that they would not attempt to escape from him, had gained for the prisoners the Mr. Sheriff's favor, so far as to let them occupy, while at the cabin, a separate apartment, and permission to take walks alone in its vicinity. While for the better purpose of avoiding escape, their horses were kept under lock and key.

It was in one of their walks, and at the foot of the cliffs that bounded the shore of the river, and the day after Everett had manned the bluffs, that our prisoners discovered, seated upon a projecting ledge of rocks, far above the surface of the stream, a lady, from every appearance anxiously watching their movements. Not far from where she sat, stood a tall and well-formed man, costumed in an attire, in the day of which we are speaking, that would now be called a backwoodsman's dress. There, his rifle placed upon a rock, and the barrel of his gun erect, he rested upon its muzzle in a thoughtful position.

"Do you see that sight, Sam?" said Laurence.

"I do, and have been looking at it for some time," replied Hyne

Hyne had scarcely made a reply before a beckoning sign was discovered emanating from the lady.

Too high to be heard by those below her, and they too low to be heard by her, the lady continued making signals till our prisoners had come in a direct line below the rock she was yet upon. When there, and in a few moments after, they discovered, dropped from her hand, a stone of some length and about two inches in thickness, enclosed in a piece of white linen rag. Attentively watching its fall, it was soon picked up, and opening the rag, to the stone intended to guide its direct descent, was tied a small piece of paper upon which was written, in pencil mark, the following sentence:

"Your lives are *sought for*, and *you* are in much danger. *Fear not*, for *she* who *writes* and has dropped you this from these *heights* is, with *others*, your devoted *friends*. *To-morrow*, and at the *same hour* you have done *to-day*, come to where you *now are*, where your will *see me*, and being told more, will be properly instructed of *how to act under it*."

Having waited till her note had been read and the signal given her that it was understood, the lady and the man seen upon the cliff disappeared, and our prisoners returned to the cabin with a new series of thoughts to those yet experienced.

The intricate route of the mountains, and their nearest passes, were all familiar to, and well understood by Nevelle; and in his anxious desire for the safety of those who were dear to others, he lost no time in acquiring an interview with Hardy.

At night-fall of the second day after leaving Everett, Nevelle arrived within view of a house at which

Standly had stopped for the night, but being uncertain as to Hardy's location, held a council. While deliberating upon what thought best, the sound of horse-tramps were heard, and, from their increase, evidently approaching the spot occupied by Nevelle; when, in a few moments after, and to his surprise as gratification, Hardy was by the side of his commander. "All is right, Captain," said Hardy, "now that I have, after a reconnoitre of Standly's position, found me. Me and my party have travelled with him during the day, and are, in every way, on social terms with him, as fellow travellers, at (pointing as he spoke) yonder house, and he not knowing who we are. It is said," continued Hardy, "that a bare missing of danger is equally good to a mile distant. I had, in anticipation of your arrival here to night, told him that we would be obliged, as travellers in another direction, to forego his company and society to-morrow. We shall do so now without fear of that loss, as you are here to prevent it."

Here Hardy informed Nevelle that, by the use they had put a quart of the "spirits of Fotheringay" cellars to, that evening, that Standly, from the use of a little more, would be easily made a bacchanal of, for a period long enough to answer speedy as further purposes. In a few minutes, six of the intimates in the service of the ladies at Fotheringay were in the house, and the addition of the latter three to the notice and social intimacy of Standly, gave to Nevelle a clue to further operations. In a little time, Hardy's predictions were realized. Standly was put to bed, and soon, under the influence of liquor upon an intoxicated remnant of sense was in a sleep, aided by stu-

por—rendered alike indifferent to things around him, as things passing were indifferent to him.

The present time alone was his, and Nevelle, with as much dispatch as precautious exactness, placed the bottle marked and sent him by the ladies, in the stead of the one marked by Standly; and drawing and burning the cork of the fatal bottle, placed a plain, unmarked one in it, having all so neatly arranged as to have been above suspicion, let alone detection. His plan thus arranged, Nevelle replaced everything after the order found in the saddle-bags of Standly, and the next morning, after taking their breakfast together, Nevelle and his men, taking an opposite course to that intended by Standly, soon left him in the enjoyment of whatever of happy reflection, upon the furtherance of his plans, that might possibly be his; while Nevelle and his party hastened, with all practicable speed, to rejoin Everett, and to learn what had been done, and what more was then going on there.

Punctual in the performance of instructions given them by the lady seen upon the cliff, our prisoners repaired at the hour appointed to the spot designated. There suspended between the rapid succession of thought upon fear and hope, they were as statues, to be looked upon, but not to look at or think of any other object than the rock high above them, on which had stood, the day before, the pantomimic fair one, offering her service in the protection and defence of them in their hours of danger.

"Hope is often the fondly cherished representative of delusion; and when most entertained, is the idoled insignia of destruction," exclaimed Laurence, as, after some time spent in intent gaze upon the cliff, he said,

"Let us go, Sam, and resign ourselves to the fate, whatever it may be, that awaits us."

At that moment, the lady of the day before of the cliff, but now of the river shore they occupied, being within speaking distance, though unseen by either, and hearing the latter part of Laurence's expression, said, "Not yet! but behold in me your friend and deliverer!"

After a tender of that sort of expression of gratitude which they were accustomed, as well from polished minds as correct principles, emanating from the prisoners, the lady continued: "I have, gentlemen, but little time to spend with you, and that little intended exclusively for your benefits. I require to be met with by an attentive ear, silent tongue, and strict compliance on your parts, upon what you shall hear, and be required to perform."

Here the lady adverted to the designs and intentions of Standly, all of which is before our readers; and after having informed them of what they had to do, and as she was about leaving the prisoners, Hyne, addressing her, said: "Lady, such kindness from your sex, we have for some time been strangers to. Allow us to ask you your name and place of residence, so that, if that time is ever ours, we may attempt a reciprocal return of such disinterested friendship as that you entertain for those before you in the pending storm now awaiting us."

"With regard to my name and place of residence," replied the lady, "the future may develop both. If so, it will be at a time when I and him you see yonder, my present attendant," (pointing to the man seen on the cliff,) "will be introduced to your acquaintance by

those you love, and whom I know will love you. Adieu, for the present," continued the lady; when in the next few moments she joined her attendant, and both disappeared among the cedars that stood in dense crowds at the foot of the river bluffs.

Nevelle's return to his camp, where his entire command was assembled, was hailed by them with that sort of confidence and high regard incident to the object held in view; and the good Laertes, after giving him an account of her interview, and performance of what Everett had entrusted to her care and management with the prisoners, left camp the next morning, accompanied by her father, for Fotheringay, where we also ask permission of our readers to go—leaving Nevelle and his party watching the movements of Standly, and ourselves to recite matters and things as they passed elsewhere.

CHAPTER XLIV.

One true and well-tried friend is worth a dozen of the miscreant order of such—because the cement that binds true friends is like that of the order of Nature, under the government of the Most High, always the same.

STANDLY was ignorant of who they were; he knew, however, that three gentlemen had arrived at the mansion the night previous to his departure from the "Mountain Inn," which he left early on the following morning, with a view of effecting the purposes already known to our readers.

Another meeting of long-separated, yet long-known and well-tried friends, was being had. It was night, and the calm of Nature's repose had begun its gradual as silent persuasions to rest, when the attention of the porter was drawn to the appearance of horsemen, as by the aid of the queen of night, they approached the gateway leading to the mansion.

As the gentlemen were dismounting, the porter was at his post, and recognising him, the servant said:—"Ah, Master Miller, I have many times had the honor of opening these gates for you, and at no one of them have I felt more pleasure than the present one gives me."

"Why so, Will?" replied Miller.

"Because, master, we have all been in great doubt with regard to the safety of ———. Excuse me, master," (suddenly recollecting himself, and putting his forefinger perpendicularly across his lips); "I am so glad to see you, that I had forgotten the order, continued Will."

"What you have said and intended for me, the signal is not now necessary to, for you are not among strangers, but those who know everything of what you perhaps was about to tell me," replied Miller.

By that time grooms were in attendance—the gentlemen's baggage and horses were taken, when they, conducted by the porter, were soon at the door of the mansion. A slight rap of the knocker soon brought Sanco into their presence, when another expression of pleasure at the return of Miller being given, the gentlemen were ushered to the Fotheringay parlors.

Being then at a late hour, and informed that Col. Leftridge and the family had retired, and refusing to

let his return be then known to them, Miller requested Sanco to conduct him and the other two gentlemen to a bed room. His request being immediately complied with, the gentlemen were soon at rest in one of the rooms adjoining the library apartment.

"Sanco," said Miller, as the servant was about leaving them, "be silent with regard to these gentlemen and me being here, till I shall instruct you to announce it to the colonel in the morning."

At dawn of the following day, Sanco had entered the apartment occupied by Miller and the strangers, and after having made a comfortable fire, was busily employed in the body-servant's duties, with which, from his raising and long practice, he was well conversant.

An half hour before breakfast, and just before the family entered the dining-room, Sanco again entered the apartment of the strangers, and after having conducted the gentlemen to the parlor, Miller instructed Sanco to go and say to his master, "That three gentlemen were in the parlor wishing to see him."

Sanco, fearful that his master might ask, "Who the gentlemen were?" and being instructed by Miller to silence, delivered his message to Sally, just then entering the bed-room of her mistress.

Second handed the message was delivered, and in a short time after, our three friends of the memorable days of '76, when the souls of men were well tried, and friendship rendered pure in the several crucibles incident to and connected with the American revolution, were together, a fourth was also present at that meeting the poor attorney. But the fifth one, Withrow, alas! was no more—he was gone, yet his four

friends were now at the spot where he had breathed his last, and had bid a final adieu to earthly affairs.

"Farewell, thou well-known one,
Thy toils of time are o'er;
Virtue has given another sun,
And life for ever more."

After that sort of agreeable surprise which a separation of nearly twenty years produces in the bosoms of well-known and tried friends at their meeting again, had settled down upon a conviction as personal reality, Colonel Leftridge asked an excuse for a temporary absence, and left the parlor. In a few moments, re-entering, he was discovered advancing arm-in-arm with Madam Leftridge—Antoinette having hold of her mother's, and Leontine the arm of her uncle. Next followed Dierdoffe, his lady, and the two Misses Thurmund, in like manner followed by Thomas and Edmund Miller. Here, and after coming into a direct line fronting his guests, the Colonel introduced them severally to his friends from New York. Immediately after which the "old school" gallantry of '76 being reacted in the persons of Major Laurence and Sergeant Hyne—each offered his arm to his intended daughter-in-law—and our Attorney following the example just shown, offered *his* arm to the Misses Thurmund, and as he did so, they accepting, he said to his sons, "Gentlemen, it is mine now, and will your times by-and-by." In that order, the young men following, they all entered the dining-room, where breakfast was waiting, and where Leftridge introduced his friends to the grandmother of Leontine.

The sombre that had for some time pervaded the

countenance of Antoinette and Leontine, and thus had become much increased by the recent deportment of Standly, was strongly evident, and too much so, to escape the notice of those who had just arrived at the mansion.

On the day after their arrival, and on an occasion when again the entire of the ladies and gentlemen spoken of as being at breakfast the morning before, were present, Major Laurence, addressing Antoinette and Leontine, said:

"Your new plan of winning lovers has been too successful thus far to fail in the completion of it,—and the gentlemen you yesterday spoke of as being in your service, are, like their fair commanders, too pure at heart, and too much of adepts at gallantry, to suffer the scheme entrusted to their management as execution to be reported incomplete with every desired success. It betrays bad generalship in a commander to appear sad, even amid danger; for, if so those who are under command become timid, and destruction too often follows. Be cheerful," continued the Major, "for it cannot now be long before you are invested with supreme command in another more pleasant sphere. To prove to you the certainty of my convictions that the command under your orders will conquer in order to save, and to render you and those for whose safety you are concerned happy," continued Major Laurence, "Mr. Hyne and myself have brought for each of you a bridal present, emblematic of the high regard we entertain for you, and happiness we anticipate in the society of our daughters-in-law, and which we hope will be accepted."

Here the gentlemen took from their pockets, each a

casket containing a rich set of diamond and pearl with other ornaments incident and adapted to that period in life when both sexes like to appear most attractive; and presenting them, that talisman of woman's greatest ornament, *virtue*, announced their silent acceptance.

"Gentlemen," said Antoinette, after those present had looked at the gifts, "I on mine and that of the part of Leontine, thank you for the honor conferred; and for yours and the sakes of those yet absent, will try to be what you desire—cheerful."

In a moment after, cheerfulness seemed to have taken the place of despondency, and buoyancy depicted upon the countenances of all, the morning passed socially and pleasantly away. Nor were the persons then present all who contributed to the pleasures of that morning;—for while our addition to the family circle of Fotheringay were with its head passing from one to another talkative as mental review of events of their youth, listened to by those present, the arrival of Laertes and her father was announced.

The former recited the part she had performed, which our readers are already in possession of—and in a few moments after the ladies withdrew from the parlor, leaving the remainder of the company listening to the description of Close upon recent events, all of which our readers are aware of.

Things had passed for several days in their usual routine of pleasure at the mansion, characteristic of those ever felt and experienced among the Virginians, when one evening while the ladies were adding charms of music to suavity, a rap was heard at the hall door. A servant soon attended to the alarm, and in a few moments after, Yancy made his appearance in the

parlor. The etiquette of an introduction to him of the strangers being passed, he had scarcely taken a chair, before the remark emanating from Leontine was heard of "We know, Mr. Yancy, that you are from the camp of Captain Nevelle, say what thou wilt—but in doing so—say not that the prisoners are no more?"

Yancy, very gentlemanly replying, said, "Were your fears realized, lady, I should be the last to appear before you, so soon after its occurrence. But as it is, fear not, and read this letter (presenting it as he spoke) which I have the honor of being the bearer of, to you and Miss Antoinette."

The magnetic caloric of love with all its impetus of anxious desire, was manifest in the appearance of Antoinette and Leontine, while the seal of that letter was being broken, under which was contained, the the following intelligence.

"*Camp near Broadford, Roanoke River,*
April 10th, 1802.

"LADIES,—Your esteemed favor of the 31st last month was received by the hand of that *one* among the *excellent* of your *six*, Miss Laertes Close; who, I ask permission here to say, has been in the part she performed of it, an eminent auxilliary to the accomplishment of the plan in view. This shall be the last letter to you, upon a subject giving doubtless much uneasiness of mind, and which (excuse me) eccentric as your love affairs are, with those for whose safety you have now great concern, is to say, that all, thus far, is as you desire it to be.

"I was present, and known by none, when the

meeting of Standly with the Mr. Sheriff and his party took place, and which occurred at the cabin at the crossings two days ago. Standly presented his forged quietus, and is thus far, as he supposes, in the leisurely accomplishment of his plan of death. But his enjoyments are temporary, and he soon will become a victim to his own designs.

"I saw the (by him supposed) fatal bottle, and that at a time Standly offered it to one, and which was accepted of, by the prisoners, when Standly observed to them: 'You keeping yours and I mine of our bitter bottles, is often the manner we drank on our first route to Fotheringay, where we will soon again meet those who have forgiven you your offences, and where you will soon be made happy in the possession of your long loved ones.'

"I could scarcely keep my tongue quietly within my teeth, nor yet command my apparent ignorance of Standly and his object, on hearing a declaration of such cool as plausible motives to esteem proceeding from so base a source, for which, I am resolved, the proper one shall pay.

"Ere you receive this, Standly and the gentlemen will be on their way to Fotheringay, where he purposes they *never* shall *return* to *alive*; but I and my party, with the exception of Yancy, (who I have ordered to rejoin us,) are here. And watching our time to capture the young gentlemen, will, I expect, have lodged them in the Cavern before you hear from me again.

"With that respect, which has ever marked my deportment towards you, and the zeal I entertain for

your happiness, I am with all of it, very respectfully your friend,

"And obedient servant,

"HENRY NEVELLE."

"To Misses Antoinette Leftridge and Leontine Withrow, Fotheringay."

Yancy availed himself of the order of absence from camp on detailed duty, as the bearer of the letter just read, on the following morning making a visit to his intended Torinda, and continuing at her father's till the morning after, set out upon his return to the camp of his commander. Yancy's arrival and report to create a new impetus to vigilance in the mind of Neville, and to avert as soon as possible the variety of suspense then in the minds of the ladies at Fotheringay, he proceeded to such measures as would most effectually as pleasantly possess both, (for whose happiness he was sincerely interested,) of that they most desired. Need we say what that was? No, for you know it already, gentle reader. In possession of that sort of intellect which at once encompasses design, and at a glance sees and knows the different effects the same causes have upon different objects. Nevelle, the morning after the return of Yancy to camp, divided his command into detachments of two, ordering them to proceed in disguise, and each detachment to be nightly in separate divisions at three several houses among the mountains that Standly and the two young gentlemen would necessarily have to stop at, in their now three days journey to the "Mountain Inn;" while he in person, would go to the

last house, and that within a few miles of the residence of Close. Where, after they should have performed their respective watch tours, his men were to join him at an encampment not far distant from the last house, and all to be there with him on the evening of the third day.

Everett and Hardy were to take the first watch tour, and at that house, the first one after Standly and his intended stepping-stone to prize, would have the cabin at the crossings, were to so manage as to draw the loads from the pistols belonging to Standly and the gentlemen.

Thus arranged, each respective party repaired, with as little delay as possible, to the different houses assigned them; when Nevelle, proceeding in a more direct course through the mountains, was at the residence of Close in the early part of the day fixed upon for rendezvous.

Close and his family received and entertained Nevelle with all that respect and esteem which his manly and honorable deportment had so justly awarded him; and while that day passed pleasantly away with him and them, at the dinner table, among other remarks that had passed there, Nevelle addressing Dorinda and Laertes, said:

"Well ladies, when will your imitation of the ancient Adonis take place? for your intended will soon be here."

"We will, when our intended say so, celebrate the vow of love in marriage, in honor of them alone, looking up to them as they to us—*modern Adonises*," replied Laertes.

"The version given by my sister, Captain, is the exact language of my heart," said Dorinda.

"That is right," replied Nevelle, "I like to hear such declarations from intended brides, and hope those you have made choice of may live long with you to see it put into practice."

As soon as he had dined, Nevelle repaired to the place of rendezvous, where, in a short time after his arrival, he was joined by Everett, Hardy, Clermont and Irwin, having served their tours at the first two houses in Standly's route. And by the time their supper was prepared by one of the party, the approach to camp of Armsdale and Yancey was discovered.

Commencing with Everett and Hardy, Nevelle listened to the several detachments, from all of whom he learned of the gradually sickened and weakened condition of Standly.

At that camp and the last one in which assembled and protecting the persons and lives of they who were dear to others, though dealt with in modes of more severity than our fair readers would do in the present day, in affairs of courtship and intended marriage, Nevelle ordered Everett and Hardy to be at the house last in the route of Standly, and there to report themselves the officers properly authorized to arrest and take into custody our continued fugitives—and to arrest Standly for a fraud practised upon the credulity of the Mr. Sheriff of the county from whence the prisoners had recently been brought.

The necessarily, and last forged document to that effect being placed in the hands of Everett. Hardy and him, accompanied by Armsdale and Yancy, were at nightfall, at their post; while Nevelle and the

balance of his command remained at a short distance from the house, for the purpose, as soon as the arrest was made, of taking the prisoners to their final destination, the Cavern.

Dark arrived, and with it our young men and their sick companion. And after an early supper, of which the gentlemen, but not Standly, partook heartily, our officers in their new sphere as Sheriff, and his Deputy of the county, made the arrest of two, but not the third offender, as ordered. For he had been already arrested in his career by another higher Power, and was then near his departure for that prison where ingrates are dealt with most severely.

The young gentlemen, still resigned to the fate awaiting them, and elated with the hope of release, were told they must be moved that night, conducted by another guard to the place of their confinement, and there to wait the issue of other proceedings. In a short time they were again on their way, conducted by Everett and the entire command, leaving Nevelle in his disguise at the house, and in the room where Standly was left, yet alive.

On entering the apartment, where Standly was, Nevelle found him in great pain, and at intervals, sensible. In one of the intervals, when a temporary relaxation was granted, Standly was heard to say, "Gentlemen, I am sick, and must soon be no more! I am accessory to my own miserable death,—and justly deserved it. I know of but one capital cause for its present appearance, and that is, in its literal sense,—*ingratitude* to those on earth, and more so to Him, before whom I must shortly appear! Not satisfied with, nor grateful for the kindness of their

fathers to me, at a fiendish hour, and in the desire of a love and possession of *ill-gotten gain*, I conceived and resorted to the execution of a plan to take the lives of the sons of my true friends and benefactors! All I can now do is, to ask their pardon and forgiveness of the atrocious crime, and to request you to bear witness for me, of the sincerity with which I ask it of them, so that it may be, when I go hence, a sort of palliation in the presence of the awful bar of heaven. In a few moments after Standly had made the confession as stated, he became delirious, and in a violent spasm, the wretched man exhibited the lifeless remains of human nature.

Nevelle was one of those, who, that night, watched over the corpse, and who, the next day, dispatched a messenger to the "Mountain Inn" with the intelligence of the death of Standly, whose nephews, having arrived there the night before with brilliant hopes of a speedy and long-continued bliss, were instead thereof, mourners to the grave of one from whom they had been taught to expect much.

The young Standlys, not aware of the arrival at the mansion of Mr. Laurence and Mr. Hyne, were unknown to them, aided in a genteel burial of their uncle. And the day after the interment, without ever having seen the ladies for whom they had come to the then "Far West," or without knowing any more than they had witnessed—the remains and burial of their uncle—they left the Inn with all his personal effects, to retrace their course back to New York.

CHAPTER XLV.

The purity of love becomes refined by the constancy we attach to it; so it is with all other virtues; and to the contrary, desolation and profligacy, are most apt to follow, in woman, however, less frequent than in man.

EVERETT, in his assumed office as sheriff of the county, had nearly arrived at the Cavern, when, after a previous conversation with the prisoners upon the treacherous course taken against them and their wishes by the late Standly, he said, "Gentlemen, I wish now to undeceive you, he who is speaking is not sheriff of this county, nor are they, by whom you are surrounded, a guard legally authorized to take you to jail. But I am one of those in command of the bandits, who, as you have, on a former occasion experienced, live upon the plunder taken from others, in the respective route of unsuspecting travellers through these mountains. You are now our prisoners, and for whatever purpose we may intend you to answer, however just the claim may be on the part of the State to have and to try you for the offence of which you are accused. At a short distance from here is our Cavern or place of head-quarters, where you will be confined during the will and pleasure of our chief, and those associated with him, relative to a final decision upon your fate. You will, however, in the intermediate time, be treated with that sort of kindness and attention, awarded those, who from time to time of their captivity, may be of least trouble to us in their confinement."

"Why are we your prisoners?" interrupting him, said Hyne.

"For reasons you cannot now know, but which will be developed in incidents hereafter following," replied the officer.

"We have had enough of incidents, as you express them, already," continued Hyne.

"That may be, so far as you are concerned, but there are others to become satisfied of that," returned the officer.

By this time the officer and his command had arrived at the Cavern, which, for the purpose of lighting and preparing it for their reception, Hardy had been ordered to in the early part of that night by Nevelle.

We need not here add anything more relative to the Cavern and its conveniences, than what has already appeared before our readers.

The proper signal being given, Hardy soon answered from within; the outer door was opened, and our prisoners were conducted to their apartment in their now-to-be temporary subterranean abode, where the fatigues of the past day, and during a part of that night, soon brought to their relief the refreshing sweets of profound sleep.

Hardy in the continuation of the duties assigned him, left nothing undone contributary to the comforts and (if such a prison as they were then in can afford it) amusement of his guests. Their repasts were prepared and served up at the proper hours in the best possible style, and so far as his orders would admit of, he allowed the prisoners the privilege of,

and access to, all, save the front apartment of the "under ground residence."

The day following the interment of the remains of Standly, Nevelle and his command paid their respects in a call upon the ladies and gentlemen of the mansion. And after much of the social as agreeable upon the events already known had passed, the ladies leaving the parlor, the conversation turned particularly upon the wretched death of him, the once favorite of the merchants then present from New York.

"If I know myself, I could have wished it otherwise than it has turned out," said Mr. Laurence. "For," continued he, "Standly was one in whom we had placed great confidence, and relied upon much as an assistant in bringing about the novel, it is true, yet long wished for and sincerely sanctioned, union of our families. His course in that portion of it entrusted to his performance, has astonished me, and affords a striking instance of the *injustice returned by many for the kindnesses performed by the few.*" Then addressing himself particularly to Nevelle, Mr. Laurence continued, "But for yours, and the kindness of your gallant associates, sir, our sons might have been this day where Standly is now—in their graves!—and he in the land of the living! You," continued our merchant, "have protected, defended, and are yet guarding them. And ere long your release of them will result, as it is hoped, in the happiness of them and their intended. And to the credit as honor of the gentlemanly banditti of these mountains."

The remarks of Laurence in relation to the parts performed by Nevelle and his command in the plans of the Heiresses of Fotheringay in their love affairs

were entirely unexpected by his men, as they were by their choice-chosen chieftain. And the latter making a few, yet appropriate, remarks in reply, he and his company a few moments after left the parlor.

The personal preparations were now being made for the several marriages that were shortly to take place at Fotheringay. Mr. Laurence and Mr. Hyne had not forgotten the requisites in point of dress of their sons. The young Millers, had some time since prepared themselves with suitable attire for the hand of the Misses Thurmond, and the two former, with Antoinette and Leontine, had prepared and presented to them every article necessary on such occasions, preparatory to the four weddings on one and the same night, to come off at the "Mansion."

The presence of the Rev. Mr. Clermont was considered indispensably necessary. He had been written to in a joint letter of Laurence and Hyne and Leftridge to be present at, and to perform the ceremony of marriage on a certain day fixed upon. In the same letter was contained invitations to his lady and their two daughters, and, by way of a continued demonstration of the high-toned sentiments and philanthropic feelings with which the three gentlemen just named were possessed, Long and Buford, with their families, were invited and especially requested to attend.

In like manner the invitations throughout the extensive acquaintance of Col. Leftridge had gone out—and with the exception of a few who were in the secrets of the then respective cabinets of love, (not though at all times to be trusted,) the general impression was that Nevelle and Everett were to be the

joined heirs to the "Heiresses of Fotheringay. And what if it turns out so! Reader, will you be disappointed? We think we hear you say, "Wait till I see the end of your work, and then I shall tell you." Well, with this promise, we shall again proceed.

Affairs about that time began to assume a melancholy as threatening appearance at the Cavern.

One night when Hardy, in accordance with orders given him, and the pleasure he felt in doing so, had prepared their supper, and had asked the prisoners to take their seats at the table, Laurence said to him,

"Mr. Keeper, will you be kind enough to us as to tell the officer in command of your party the night you brought us here, that we wish an interview with him?"

"Now, sir?" inquired Hardy.

"After we have supped will be time enough," returned Laurence.

No other remarks passed between Hardy and the prisoner, but as soon as they had supped, and Everett had taken his tea, he entered their apartment.

When Everett had seated himself, Laurence said to him, "Knowing no other but our keeper and you, sir, of your party, and none to apply to for the information wished, we desire in the name of humanity that you tell us by what authority we are here? For what? And what is to be our fate?"

As Laurence made his appeal to Everett the countenances of both the prisoners portrayed serenity, though representing involutions of much depth of thought.

"Your questions, sir," replied Everett, "are such as that time alone must solve; and as I have before

told you, I say still, that I cannot, indeed *dare* not answer."

"Will you, then?" continued Laurence, "answer other questions which, by your permission, we wish to ask you?"

"If I can, I shall do so with much pleasure," returned the gentlemanly Everett.

"Thank you," replied Laurence, "then I shall proceed."

"Do you know the *deaf* and *dumb* ladies we have been accused with the crime of running off, or stealing from the abode of their parents?" continued Laurence.

"Slightly," replied Everett.

"Are they well?" continued Laurence.

"They ought to be, for they are to be married in a few days from now," replied Everett, "to two young men of the neighborhood."

"Have the ladies been long engaged to them?" said Laurence, in a kind of faltering articulation.

"Not very—but a short time, I believe," returned Everett.

Here, Laurence thanking the officer for the information he had given them, and looking at him with a pleasant smile, said, "We will try and give you and your party, the least possible trouble in the future of our existence here," placing emphasis on the last words of the sentence as he expressed it, and himself and Hyne remaining in entire silence after its expression.

Everett withdrawing, pulled the door of their apartment after him, and leaving it just closed remained at it. His fears of violence on their persons

being excited from the just expressed last words of Laurence to him. He had continued at the door but a moment when a recurrence of that sort of language calculated to increase his suspicions, fell in rapid succession upon his listening ear, from the same source as had come the first that had caused his alarm.

Raising his head from an inclined position resting upon his hand with his elbow upon the table at which they were still seated, and casting a wild vacant look upon the walls of the Cavern and things around him, Laurence continued. "They ought to be, for they are to be married in a few days from now to two young gentlemen of the neighborhood." Then asking the question of Hyne, "Did you hear that?" Laurence continued, "It is all over with us now, Sam. I do not wish—and I suppose you feel as I do—to let 'time alone solve' what our confinement here, and the information given us by that officer of the bandits, have but too forcibly proven, that we have loved in vain! and, that those in whose bosoms we had thought the pulse of purest affection beat for us, are now the chosen and betrothed brides of others! From signs visible in yonder Chamber of Death," continued Laurence, "nature will have erected for us without parade, and with the cost only of momentary *pain*, a monument as well as a vault for our remains. And," continued Laurence, "the few remarks we shall write and leave behind us in this Cavern, may serve as an epitaph to our memories! What are your opinions upon that which I have said, and by me will be carried into effect?"

"I had rather die at once, than to spend in slow

process a miserable existence here. When will you write the remarks you speak of?" said Hyne.

When we can get the material to do so with, from the keeper, which will be to-morrow I hope," replied Laurence.

At that remark our prisoners as calm and as composed, as if they were then in possession of their lost ones at the Mansion, retired to rest—when Everett leaving his station, went into the ante-room and related to his companions what he had heard.

The deliberate intention to suicide of the prisoners as overheard by Everett, were on the following morning communicated to the ladies and gentlemen at the Mansion.

The intended strange as unexpected course of the prisoners caused another alarm in the minds of Antoinette and Leontine, resulting in a determination with them to assume their former characters of performances as *deaf* and *dumb;* and in the feared tragical end of those who loved them, to show their constancy, and to avert the pending destruction to a last trial given before the entire completion of their own yet eccentric way of gaining husbands in converting lovers to their own proper use, and requital of affection.

A day or two previous to the aspect of affairs at the Cavern, so far as yet known, Nevelle had been dispatched on a matter which, though not then understood by him, in the nature of a "love-trap" (if allowed the expression) for him and others, had leading strings attached—the pulling of which by those more experienced in such delights terminated in that way.

We have already seen that there had been letters

written to Clermont, Long and Buford. In the one to the former gentleman, and after the close of the trio, Mr. Laurence and Mr. Hyne added the following as a "postscript."

"The ladies here, as you perceive, have specially requested your daughters, Miss Long and Miss Buford, to act as bridesmaids in certain affairs here, and have sent Mr. Nevelle and the two Messrs. Miller as escorts. See that they come, and you and lady prevail upon Madames Long and Buford, accompanied by their husbands, to come with you."

The postscription of our merchants had the desired effect, and the young ladies, accompanied by the gentlemen spoken of, soon arrived at the "Mansion."

Their pistols being taken and kept from them, at and since their time of capture and confinement in the Cavern, the mode devised by the prisoners to deprive the heart of its throb, and the body of its action, was but one alone in their power, and that one was—to open the veins of the neck, arms and thighs with their razors. Those instruments (of death to them) they had laid each one, upon a crystal slab that lay in the Cavern, and one at each spot of the room selected by them to die in.

The few articles of dress and other personal valuables which the prisoners had been permitted to retain, were all carefully deposited in their (then only convenience for carrying clothing) saddle-bags, and which had been taken by them into the Chamber of Death.

The few remaining hours they had allowed themselves to live were passed in a melancholy mood of mind, and their next object was to obtain articles for

writing, and to spend one mental exertion in letting the world know the indifference with which they looked upon life and time things, when deprived of those they loved.

The request of the prisoners to be furnished with writing materials was readily complied with, but they knew not, nor had the most distant idea of that their guardian angel, in woman's shape, was in the Cavern.

Alone, and the day previous to that in which they intended committing the fixed upon "fatal act," in speaking of their approaching end, Laurence was heard to say, "If we cannot obtain our objects upon earth, we have it in our power, at least, to thwart the proceedings of men against us. Then taking his pen he wrote the following:

"*Subterraneous Prison, April 25th*, 1802.

"The object and end of Justice is defeated. If laws are made a nullity by irregular commitment, and excessive bail demanded for a bailable offence, honor is unsafe in such keeping. We prefer death to a forced submission consequent upon indignities in prosecution.

"Spare the (to us) strangers, for whom alone our last pulses beat; let it suffice that we die for them—a knowledge of which might be to them a sense of horror. They are the innocent injured victims of circumstances which they could neither foresee nor avoid.

"Let no one claim the trifling property left in this room—let it be given to some one in charity, without parade. We have no other estate—we have no wives or children to shed a tear at our loss to them.

"The spirits that once animated these mangled bodies disdain to ask the least grace for them of fellow worms. Perhaps the first paragraph in this note is unjust; if so, let those it concerns be happy—to err is human. Let no one say, 'too much, or too little has been written'—the dead cannot reply."

When Laurence had finished and read what he had written to Hyne, they both signed, and having folded, taken and laid it with their other effects in the Death Chamber, Laurence returned to their room. But a few moments had passed after he had done so, before Hardy entered their apartment, saying, that, "two ladies were in the ante-chamber, wishing to see and to come into their room, if permitted by them."

"Who are they, Mr. Keeper?" said Hyne.

"If I must tell you, sir, they have obtained permission from our commander to enter our quarters upon some important occasion, no doubt. I have their passports signed by our Captain, now in my pocket, giving them general permission of access here, sir," continued the Keeper. "And, as I can tell you, our Captain is much of a gallant, he has brought ladies here himself before now."

"Do you know them?" continued the Keeper, after handing the passport to Laurence—he and Hyne looking intently upon it.

"Ellen and Susan! is it possible? What could have brought them here?" was the ejaculatory remark of both prisoners.

"Know them! yes, but too well," replied Laurence, as he folded and returned the paper. "Will you show them to where we are, Mr. Keeper?" continued Laurence.

In a little time after, the long-separated were again together, and while busily engaged in written communications to one another, Hardy, by order of the ladies had entered the Chamber of Death, and removed from their place of deposite the razors belonging to our prisoners, and (as they termed it) their "epitaph."

The balance of the paper that had at their request been supplied the prisoners in their melancholy mood of tragical intent and operations, was being rapidly consumed in a long catalogue of questions and written answers returned by our heretofore seen devoted lovers. But it was all to no advantageous definite hope, as they supposed, on the part of the prisoners, for to every question asked by Hyne (he being the interrogator of Ellen for herself and Susan) her answers were invariably framed so as to terminate with "a new era in our affections have taken place," and it would now be alike dishonorable as disrespectful in us, towards those we love to say No."

A profound silence ensued, after several answers had been given in a literally like language when Laurence said:—

"Sam this is proof sufficient of the treachery of woman's heart! How often have those now before us, not only written but have given personal demonstration of their profound love for, and attachment to us! It were madness to hope for, and folly to think on them longer. To-morrow will end all with us. Let them go their way, and be happy! When needs must we shall be no more."

Here another tact in the inuendo design of the ladies was resorted to, when Susan, as if ignorant of what had been said, again wrote:—"Gentlemen, certain

that our marriages are to take place day after to-morrow; knowing that you are here, and not satisfied with anything short of an attempt at least, to have you eye-witnesses of the ceremony commensurate with our earthly bliss. Ellen and myself have made the attempt, and have succeeded in getting a stop put to further prosecution, not only on the part of the State, but those of individuals against you in your late love excursion with us. In our possession is not a *forged*, as others have been, but properly authenticated proof of what is here stated.

When Ellen had finished what she had written to Hyne, the document of their release accompanied it—then continuing she wrote—

"Know, that from this hour, you are free. The earnest as deeply impressed requests of our hearts are, that you, in person, attend our wedding hour! Do not refuse our request, as in doing what we ask, now, as a favor, you will affix a lasting impression upon friendship's memory for you."

That unexpected, sincerely-meant request, produced another short period of silence, when Hyne wrote:—

"Ladies, the edifice of affection erected for you, and having for its foundation the hearts that yet throb within our bosoms, must henceforth fall into ruins! Yet from them a slender fabric of mere friendship for you may be constructed—to totter in separation, and ultimately to make memory a wilderness of despair. If our compliance with your wish be a gratification to you, you shall have a peformance of it; but no longer than to see you in the possession of others. For then we shall have important matters of our own to attend to, of which, in the future

of your happiness, you may be at some time apprised."

The indignity and want of reciprocity with which our now liberated prisoners thought themselves treated, were rather sources of alarm than otherwise, to their devoted, though seemingly indifferent intended ones. But, true to their purpose, Ellen and Susan were like fixtures in a certain Egyptian wonder of modern time, as if about to fall—bent to the accomplishment of events yet unknown.

That kind of persuasive eloquence of look with which Heaven has endowed lovely, and particularly virtuous woman, had upon the minds of our still sternly freed ones, at length the desired effect.

Not knowing that that interview with them in the cavern by the ladies was the preliminary as final arrangement for the restoration to them of all they had thought lost, and for the concentration of renewed hope, founded upon reality of entire possession of those they loved, and had determined to die as a proof of. Laurence and Hyne consented to accompany the ladies, on their return home, as far as the "Mountain Inn." There they had determined to remain, and had passed their words to be at the mansion on the evening of the weddings, precisely at six o'clock.

That arrangement made, the gentlemen requested the ladies to remain seated, till they had collected what of effects they had brought and had with them in the Cavern.

Hardy, being within hearing of all that was said, but in the next apartment, immediately returned their effects to the respective spots occupied by them

in the chamber of death, and in the stead of its reality, folded and sealed a blank sheet of paper, representing that upon which the so-called epitaph was written, concealing and subsequently giving it to Ellen.

In a little time the ladies and gentlemen were at the entrance of the antechamber doorway of the Cavern, where Sanco was in attendance, and who had led their own horses, equipped for service; those belonging to the ladies being, as is already known, well trained, at the pointing of the whip of their mistresses, came to where they were; when, being mounted, the four, attended by Sanco, were again on their way to the "Inn" and to the "Mansion."

The next day the gallant huntsmen returned to their respective owners the valuables and jewelry they had borrowed to decorate their Cavern with; and having nothing to do then but to prepare for the pleasures it had given rise to, Captain Nevelle disbanded his command, all of whom were happily rewarded for the tours they had served in the chivalric campaign, terminating in the established bliss of twenty, and loss of but *one* life.

As it is affirmed, "that there is but one step between the sublime and the ridiculous," in like ratio we think there is but a slight barrier between the inclination to refusal, and that of acceptance of offers emanating from hearts that tally for one another, however magnified the alleged cause for separation may be.

The day after their arrival at the "Mountain Inn," Laurence and Hyne received the following note with an accompaniment.

"*The Mansion*, 26 *April*, 1802.

"The last requests that we shall ever ask of you in our present estates are, that you will accept of and appear in to-morrow night here, the articles of dress herewith sent. We make the request, because its compliance will assimilate the mode that *certain* others are to be costumed in on the occasion.

"Let us know by the bearer, Sanco, of your *acceptance* or *refusal*. Do say, the *former*.

"ELLEN.
"SUSAN."

"To Messrs. G. L. Laurence, Saml. L. Hyne, Mountain Inn."

In the package sent was an entire (though unknown to them of its purpose,) wedding-suit for each, which, after being carefully examined by our gentlemen, their thanks to and acceptance of from the ladies, were forthwith returned.

The morning of the 27th April appeared; the sun in his glorious and brilliant career had commenced his course, and not a cloud then, nor during the day, ventured an obstruction to the rays of light and gentle warmth that was being shed upon Nature's wide domain.

Towards evening, and from every direction, were seen ladies and gentlemen on horseback, as they arrived at the "Inn" and at the "Mansion."

Though they had lived at the Mountain Inn for several months, Laurence and Hyne were strangers to all, and being lookers on and listeners to what was passing, occasionally heard remarks made among the crowd that was there, of "how happy this night will

be to—Nevelle and Everett." For it was a remarkable, as singular coincidence, that in none of the invitations given, was there a word said of to whom Antoinette and Leontine were to be married. Hence, conjectures formed upon the attentions paid them by the gentlemen mentioned, caused the general remark; though innocent within itself, was anything else but pleasant to the ears of some who heard it.

According to the requests contained in the notes of the ladies to them, Laurence and Hyne had dressed, and punctual, were at the hour appointed in one of the parlors at the Mansion.

The hours of the day rolled on, night fast approaching. And ere the swift-winged arrows of light had disappeared from the horizon, two out of three magnificently decorated parlors on the same floor were crowded with feminine beauty, waited upon or attended to by gallant mountaineers.

The parlors opened into one another after form and shape of the letter T, and that one not in a direct line with the other two, was discovered with some degree of notoriety as surprise to be closed and locked.

The poor attorney, the poor man Close, or in other words, the Maniac, and the keeper of Captain Nevelle's head-quarters, Mr. Hardy, were on this occasion acting-masters of ceremony. And the two former being personally acquainted with Laurence and Hyne, were strict in the directed disposal to be made (though unknown) of them.

At half-past the hour of nine o'clock, the ceremony was to take place.

A semi-circle was formed by those in possession of

the arrangements, extending from one extreme of the two (in a line) parlors to the other.

Melvin and Urnsden with their ladies and Madam Rayford, were placed at that part of the circle immediately fronting the sliding door of the third parlor. And from a deference to Laurence and Hyne they were placed a little in advance of the last named gentlemen, where they stood arm-in-arm. Thus arranged the whole party could see the door, yet closed and locked, and when opened distinctly discover any movement therein.

The order of entry, by the brides, grooms, and their respective attendants, was to be from the outer door of the two parlors, at the foot of the stairway in the hall. Thence proceeding to a position in front of the locked door, where they were to stand forming a line on each side, and leaving the view of it clear; the heiresses with their attendants taking a position at the head of each line and near the spot occupied by Laurence and Hyne.

Silence, in its most acute sense, presided over the scene then being presented. Not even a whisper or move was heard or seen, as intruders upon the mental or occular powers then in operation upon unexpected, and as yet, unknown future events.

At length the parlor door leading into the hall was opened, and a passway through the line at it being made, were seen advancing, Antoinette and Captain Nevelle, attended by Miss Caroline Clermont, Laertes, and Armsdale.

Next came Leontine, attended by Miss Uala Clermont, Dorinda Close, Lieutenant Everett, and Yancy. Next came Miss Jane Thurmund and Thomas Miller,

attended by Miss Elenora Buford, Miss Eliza Long, Clermont, and Irwin.

Next were seen, Miss Eliza Thurmund and Edmund Miller, attended by Miss Marian Long, Miss Ringetta Buford, George Washington and Green Close.

One of the needful requisites on such occasions as that of which we are now speaking, and attempting to describe, furnishing the means by which the nuptial vow is made complete, and the commencement of happiness or sorrow in it, as the case may be. His Reverenceship had, as yet, been nowhere seen by the attending guests on the occasion, and every eye was fixed on the line formed by the grooms, their brides, and those of their honored select.

At that moment, Antoinette and Leontine were discovered leaving the sides of Nevelle and Everett, and taking a position side by side, immediately in front of and a few steps distant from their (as the gentlemen had arrived at the conclusion of) discarded lovers.

If mental or personal beauty have charms, the splendor of rich and elegant apparel is an impetuous auxiliary to the mind and eye, in thinking upon and looking at the respective differences.

Here raising their elegant veils, and looking at them —"Mr. Laurence and Mr. Hyne, Gentlemen," at one and the same time, said the ladies. In the next moment, the young friends gazed at each other in mute astonishment. "It may well surprise you," continued Antoinette, "that the deaf hear and the dumb speak, and that on this occasion, and not before, in their long acquaintance with you, they have assumed the privilege, as well as ask for the high pleasures they feel, in doing so."

"The mysteries with which you have been surrounded since your arrival at the Mountain Inn, and acquaintance with us, commenced in the room you now are, are now being solved. In their solution and before an eventful period now about taking place with us, is began, I ask in my own behalf and that of her who stands by my side, your indulgence while I make a few other remarks.

"There is no time in the life allotted to ladies, in which they are more free than during their celibacy. In it apportioned to us, and especially since our acquaintance with you, we have enjoyed that freedom to (connected with its circumstances) an unparalleled extent, and after such a mode as may perhaps, have amounted in your estimation to rudeness. If so, we here ask your forgiveness, and hope that ere I am done with what I am saying, and which we have a right to before a submerging of liberty into that of obedient subjection, we will occupy another position in your mind's-eye, to that which the past might justify—your slight, and consequently your neglect.

"In the retrospect, you had no sooner reached the Mountain Inn than that which may seem to have the appearance of an unpardonable disposition to coquetry, commenced with us and under its influence upon our minds and practice of by us, appearances now surrounding you now may be attributed. It was us, who, on the night of your arrival at the Inn as strangers, played and sang, though unknown to, for your pleasure, and led by curiosity to see those we had heard of, but not the pleasure of knowing a sight of you was got in the deer hunt the next morning. In that, as well as at subsequent periods, down to the

present one, you were and continued to be impressed with the belief that *two* of the many personal misfortunes incident to life were ours. To the then every appearance of truth in what you beheld the honor of preferment was given in asking our hearts and hands.

"Not satisfied with the ascendancy thus gained, we still practiced duplicity towards those who deserved a better reward, and to carry it to a still greater extent the very ones who you have beheld this night conducting us to the altar of love, were associated with us in the extent to which that duplicity was practiced toward you. In fact, the gentlemen you have seen conducting other ladies as we were just now, were the (as you suppose) banditti that accosted us on the mountains the night of our escape from this house, and who gave to us the golden chains as a passport of yours and our security—nor was that near all. Your confinement in the Cavern, and recent release therefrom, with other strange circumstances with which you have been surrounded, have taken their origin in your first sight of the beloved ones, as such, *deaf* and *dumb*.

"Though a high sense of false pretensions were seemingly ours, and which, frequently we were fearful of the consequences of, we still clung with hope the fonder to those we loved, and could not think for a moment of suffering the risk any longer of your carrying into effect, consequent upon the indignities with which you had been treated by us—the commission of suicide. Hence our late visit to you, and earnest request that you (and we are more than pleased to see it complied with) would attend our weddings. The deception practiced upon you had gone so far as a

change of the names of families found here by you had made it necessary to do, to bring into its proper sphere the opinions of yourselves relative to ladies which you may remember to have expressed, viz:—

"'She must be a Venus to whom I would say, "Will you marry me?"'

"As regards the names we have gone by, they were only borrowed; and it is necessary on this occasion here to say, that you behold in me, Antoinette, the only child of Colonel George Leftridge, and in her who I hold by the arm, my cousin, Leontine, daughter of the late James Withrow, whose miniature and watches were on our persons the day you become offended at what you thought a want in us of affection for you.

"Now, sirs, I take pleasure (the want of language I have not to express) that you are here for a still more valuable purpose than to be mere guests upon this occasion. If we have been coquettes in appearance, we have not been so in reality; but to carry out the certainty to you that we are worthy of the honor we now claim of taking your hands, giving in exchange for them our own, and our hearts as pledges of a faithful compliance with contracts now about to be entered into between yourselves and us."

Here placing their arms upon those of Laurence and Hyne, Antoinette and Leontine passed through the lines to the locked door of the third parlor, giving their intended introductions to the respective grooms, brides, and attendants as they passed. When Antoinette on arriving at the door again, said, "Among other pleasures that will be yours, is that of seeing your friend, the Rev. Mr. Clermont, who officiates on

this, to us and others, happy occasion, and who is in the room we are about entering, where, also, you will see your fathers!"

At that the parlor door opened, when were seen advancing toward them the gentlemen mentioned, accompanied by Murdock. The late known grooms, with their brides, resumed their stations in the line. It changed its position to a front of the circle. In a few moments after, a general expression of good feeling, hilarity and pleasantry resounded throughout the expansive parlors of the Mansion, rendered still more pleasant by the music and dancing that followed.

In a short period from the time the four weddings had come off at Fotheringay, others at that time in a favorable condition were agreeably fulfilled. Their consummation strengthened the respective links of friendship.

Long and Buford were restored to the favor of their old friends. And as for Hardy, an old bachelor, who the ladies liked to talk to on general subjects, but not love matters, he was, nevertheless, a clever fellow in his notions upon life, and leaving the mountains of Virginia he put off to New York, where he lived for several years after, respected and esteemed in the families of Laurence and Hyne.

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